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The Nation.

April 3, 1982 $1.25

EDITORIAL

THE PRESIDENT AS HUCKSTER

The best propaganda is the plain truth, as everyone knows. But the unvarnished reality of Reaganism is so unappealing that his Department of Newspeak is hard pressed to find enough experts in high gloss. Just last week the head of the Voice of America resigned after failing to politicize the network in ten months on the job; not long before that the deputy director chose to retire rather than wield the brush.

In the meantime, it is comforting to know that the great communicator himself is filling in. In response to the killings of the four Dutch journalists in El Salvador, Reagan quickly issued a whitewash statement before waiting for an investigation by the Dutch government or any impartial source. "We have no information," he said blithely, "to contradict the El Salvador Government report" that the journalists simply wandered into an ongoing battle.

Then when Reagan came up to New York City to accept—apparently without shame—a humanitarian award from the National Conference of Christians and Jews, he became his own public-relations flak. "Like F.D.R.," he had the temerity to boast, "may I say I'm not trying to destroy what is best in our system of humane, free government—I'm doing everything I can to save it."

Coincidentally—or maybe as a device to make the humanitarian award seem credible—it was on that same day that Reagan sent Congress his plan for (how the huckster in him must enjoy the phrase) "enterprise zones." Reagan pulled out all the stops: the zones would "create a productive, free market environment," eliminate "inefficiencies of monopolized government services" and "save taxpayers substantial sums."

This plan, in reality, is nothing more than an advertisement for the failure of American capitalism. It will be hard to make that look like The American Dream.

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HOW REAGAN USES TRUTH

IGNORANCE AS PUBLIC POLICY

ALAN WOLFE

During the early postwar years, America's leaders saw themselves as tutors, bringing along to maturity their reluctant pupils, the American people. Convinced that the average American had a parochial view of world affairs, liberal empire builders from Harry Truman to John Kennedy sponsored campaigns to educate their charges about the responsibilities of—as they called it—global leadership. The intentions were often malevolent and self-serving, the results mixed and the processes painful, but over time the American people did begin to understand more about the world into which they were thrust after World War II.

Under Ronald Reagan the interactive process between America's leaders and its people is being altered. Precisely because so many Americans have come to know a good deal about the world, the current Administration is determined, one might say, to "diseducate" them. Its plan for a reassertion of empire at this point in history requires not knowledge and enlightened opinion but prejudice and sentiment. It is devoting its best efforts to the deliberate cultivation of ignorance.

There is a sense in which what passes for conservatism in the United States has always been ignorant. By "ignorant" I do not mean lacking intelligence; if anything, I find logic, clarity of thought and good writing more evident these days in some right-wing newspapers than among many of my comrades on the left. I mean a more serious kind of ignorance: the willful suppression of worldly knowledge for the sake of concerns so parochial that they are, from the standpoint of Western humanism, shameful. Nowhere else on the political spectrum have so

(*Continued on Page 398*)

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LETTERS.

VICTIMS OF JUSTICE

Brooklyn, N.Y.

Bertram Gross identified a serious problem when he wrote of the triple jeopardy suffered by crime victims ["Some Anticrime Proposals for Progressives," *The Nation*, Feb. 6]. He might well have added a fourth: the victimization inflicted by the criminal justice system itself.

Since taking office as District Attorney in January, I have witnessed some dismaying scenes. In Brooklyn, crime victims waiting to be interviewed by prosecutors can spend hours in a filthy, graffiti-decorated waiting room. All witnesses (including victims) are scheduled to appear at grand jury hearings at 9:30 A.M., even though most will not be called for hours. A delay-ridden court calendar discourages victims from pursuing cases, thus hurting our chances of winning them.

I have addressed those problems that can be corrected with a fresh coat of paint or an adjustment of schedules. As Gross points out, however, crime victims are entitled to a comprehensive Bill of Rights. To his list I would add, among other things, the rights to:

(*1*) be kept fully informed of the status of their cases;

(*2*) have their cases processed promptly;

(*3*) be present at sentencing;

(*4*) have a judge consider *their* suffering when a criminal is sentenced.

This Bill of Rights will become a reality only when the criminal justice system wakes up to the importance of treating victims decently. Unfortunately, we are still far from realizing that goal. *Elizabeth Holtzman*
District Attorney, Kings County

SYMPATHY FOR THE REVOLUTION

Berkeley, Calif.

Somewhat belatedly, I have chanced upon Richard Falk's piece entitled "The Sidetracking of a Revolution" [*The Nation*, Jan. 30]. It is easy to understand why those who supported the Iranian revolution on the assumption that its quintessentially Islamic nature would be superseded by more familiar ideological options should now be disappointed (for what has happened in Iran is precisely that a sidetracking of the revolution has been prevented). Their disappointment, however, is no excuse for presenting a tissue of distortion and rumor as serious analysis.

Among Falk's glaring errors is the assertion that in 1972, Imam Khomeini declared it the religious duty of every Iranian to support the People's Mujahedeen; on the contrary, Khomeini steadfastly refused to endorse the group, despite the recommendations of several high-ranking religious scholars. An example of the distortions in Falk's piece is his quotation from an interview that Khomeini granted me in December 1978. Khomeini's statement that "our method is one of education and guidance" was in answer to a question I posed on the antagonism between Sunni and Shiite Moslems. It was not a definition of political method, and there was certainly no reason for Khomeini to limit his options to "education and guidance" when Abolhassan Bani-Sadr, together with the crypto-secularists and latecomers to Islam gathered around him, attempted to subvert the revolution and defy the Constitution.

There is one correction to Falk's article I make with particular confidence. He identifies me as "a prominent U.S. authority who was sympathetic with the revolution." The tense is wrong. I *am* sympathetic with the revolution, and anticipate an indefinite continuation of that sympathy.

Hamid Algar
Professor of Persian and Islamic Studies
University of California, Berkeley

FALK REPLIES

Princeton, N.J.

Basically, Hamid Algar's letter makes me sad. He is, after all, a well-known interpreter of Islamic thought, someone whose translations have helped bring the progressive thought of Ali Shariati to an English-speaking audience. For him to embrace Khomeini's terror in the name of Islam strikes me as a religious, as well as a political and moral, betrayal, one that certainly would have horrified Shariati, whose affirmation of Islam included an intense opposition to clerical pretensions.

I acknowledge that Khomeini's comments about "education and guidance" were made in a more specific context, as Algar contends, but in fact they reflected his basic outlook as expressed in the interview as a whole. For instance, when talking about elections and the political process, Khomeini told Algar that "we will make our recommendations to the people which they may or may not follow." Nowhere was there a hint of the terrorism and repression that have become the daily reality in Khomeini's version of "an Islamic republic."

Khomeini's earlier support for the People's Mujahedeen, while not clearly expressed in a written text, has been confirmed to me by several prominent Iranians who had earlier been close confidants of Khomeini, as well as by Mujahedeen leaders who had been in regular contact with him during his years of exile in Iraq.

If Algar had troubled to read my earlier writings on Iran, he would have seen that I regarded the Islamic context of the Iranian revolution as positive, but my expectations, created in part by Khomeini's own promises, were shaped by the prospect of a governing process that showed respect for human rights and democracy. Algar's failure to reconsider his own commitment in light of these broken promises to the Iranian people is disappointing, even shocking; it is this sort of blind adherence to power by ideologues of varying persuasions that has been responsible for much of the cruelty and bloodshed in the modern world. *Richard Falk*

'DOUBLE STANDARDS'

New York City

An incidental comment on the Susan Sontag controversy ["Communism and the Left," *The Nation*, Feb. 27]: *The Nation* would not carry an advertisement for, much less sponsor, tourism to Florida or Utah, since those states have not ratified the Equal Rights Amendment. I note the half-page advertisement in the February 27 issue inviting me to spend my vacation on a *Nation*-sponsored excursion to the Soviet Union, sightseeing in the Kremlin and cruising up the Volga to visit Lenin's birthplace.

You protest in the editorial introduction to the Sontag section that you find the issue of "'double standards' . . . exceptionally difficult." Don't you, though!

Henry Schwarzschild

REPLY

*Henry Schwarzschild begins with an erroneous premise. We certainly do run politically unsavory advertisements. And as we explained in an earlier editorial outlining our advertising policy ["*The Nation*'s Ad Policy," Jan. 27, 1979], for First Amendment reasons and because advertising is an important source of revenue, we start "with the presumption that we will accept advertising even if the views expressed are repugnant to those of our editors." But perhaps this answer sidesteps Schwarzschild's real concern. We do favor cultural and political exchanges with the Soviet Union; to do otherwise in an age of massive nuclear weaponry is simply irrational. In any case, a cruise up the Volga does not imply an endorsement of human rights violations in the Soviet Union, violations we readily condemn.*

—The Editors

DEMOCRACY AND DISARMAMENT

"Protest and Survive: Poland, El Salvador and Disarmament," a conference linking the struggles for democratic rights around the world with the fight for peace and nuclear disarmament, will be held at New York City's Riverside Church on Saturday, April 17, beginning at 10 A.M. Speakers include Daniel Singer and Dan Smith. For information and tickets write:

Solidarity Support Campaign
301 West 105th St., #2R
New York, N.Y. 10025

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EDITORIALS.

Love of Liberty

Perhaps the most dramatic moment in Norman Lear's TV-spectacular tribute to American freedom, *I Love Liberty*, an attempt to wrest the mantle of patriotism from the Moral Majority, came in Jane Fonda's moving tribute to John Wayne. After showing a videotape of the Duke saying that although he disagreed with Fonda he would defend her right to say what she thought, she added: "There are some things that John Wayne and I agreed on, words that many of us from one end of the political spectrum to the other hold very dear." When she proceeded to read the First Amendment she ignited a burst of applause from the audience in the Los Angeles Sports Arena.

What a sad irony that only three days before this show was broadcast, the Senate voted, 90 to 6, for the biggest "incursion" into the First Amendment since the Smith Act. We refer, of course, to the Intelligence Identities Protection Act, which for the first time will criminalize the disclosure or publication of some unclassified material already in the public domain. We would have been struck by the spectacle of Senator Goldwater voting for this bill even as he joined

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the TV flag-waving for the First Amendment, but his performance was overshadowed by the crowd of liberals who could not find the courage or conviction to oppose this American version of an official secrets act. The only opponents were Biden of Maryland, Bradley of New Jersey, Cranston of California, Hart of Colorado, Moynihan of New York and Pressler of South Dakota. And even they, it turns out, would have voted for a narrower version of this unconstitutional legislation.

We love liberty, too, but we lament that in the week of its most visible recent celebration it was so seriously diminished.

Right Angles

It seems that only yesterday our college campuses were said to be hotbeds of revolt, protest, dissent—against the multiversity, the Vietnam War, the draft, the corruption of the Presidency.

Now we are told [see Fran R. Schumer's "The New Right's Campus Press," page 395] that a new form of protest is asserting itself in the academic community—this one, however, includes mean-spirited attacks against homosexuals, minorities and women, and its medium is not rallies or demonstrations but a resurgent wave of conservative newspapers and magazines.

And there is another difference. This new student "activism" may or may not be indigenous, but it certainly is subsidized in a way the civil rights, antiwar and other progressive movements of the 1960s and 1970s were not. The campaign to "win back" the campuses is apparently being spearheaded by the Institute for Educational Affairs, the conservative "maxi-foundation" which Peter H. Stone described as "a bridge between academia and business" [see "Teaching the 'Right' Stuff," *The Nation*, September 19, 1981].

There's nothing inherently immoral, indecent or improper about this collection of new or transformed publications living off the subsidies of right-wing foundations. But it would seem critical that students and citizens of all persuasions be aware of what is going on, and recognize that this is but another step in the creeping corporatization of our colleges and universities, where the battle of ideas is becoming more and more a matter of dollars and cents.

Salvador's Vote

Most Americans would probably assume that elections are the essence of a democracy, but there are certain conditions under which an election can be nondemocratic—or worse, even antidemocratic. The elections in El Salvador on March 28 provide an apt case in point: government repression had forced dissenting groups into armed insurgence and prevented the formation of any new above-ground opposition on the center or the left, so the voters had no meaningful choice; and yet many of the parties that were permitted to participate in the elections represented the most antidemocratic elements in the country.

The Reagan Administration has tried to portray the elections as free and open to all political elements, including the opposition parties in the Democratic Revolutionary Front. But how could opposition groups, even moderate ones, really have been expected to take part after their previous experiences in trying to work through the established institutions?

A number of moderates, like Social Democratic leader Guillermo Ungo, had participated in the 1972 elections, only to find the results voided by the military. Some even took part in the seemingly reformist junta set up in October 1979, until its complicity in the terrorism of right-wing death squads and its failure to control military repression forced their resignations. As late as April 1980, moderates and reform-minded allies in labor, student and professional organizations joined to create an overground coalition in the Democratic Revolutionary Front; but just seven months later, the front's president, Enrique Alvarez, and five other leaders were arrested and subsequently assassinated.

It is hardly surprising that the front's leaders took sanctuary underground and in Mexico City, or that the opposition turned toward the armed insurgency that has now grown into full-scale civil war. All possibilities of peaceful political opposition died with Alvarez.

Given the power of the military in El Salvador today, no opposition leader could reasonably have asked supporters to sign election petitions that would most likely end up being death lists. No opposition leader could reasonably have campaigned in public after having seen so many colleagues assassinated. It is not accidental that no candidate campaigned on a platform of reform of the military: none could have, and lived.

The position of the revolutionary front is clear enough. It is not opposed to elections, but it does say that prior negotiations are necessary to create the political conditions for a truly democratic vote. Elections can be a valid tool for choosing leaders and defining policies only when there is a consensus about national goals, a tolerance for differences within that consensus and a respect for human life and freedoms of speech and association by all parties. In a country where an oligarchy is willing to use death squads and assassination to block reform and a powerful military continues five decades of brutal practices of repression, elections simply cannot be democratic.

What is more, U.S. support for elections held under those conditions ends up having destructive rather than positive consequences. For one thing, the electoral charade undermines the legitimacy of democratic procedures—one reason that most of the sixty countries the Salvadorans invited to send observers to the elections refused to do so. For another, those who might actually favor genuine democracy are excluded from the political process. And worst of all, this kind of election permits people to come to power who have no commitment to democracy whatsoever—as, for example, Roberto D'Aubuisson, a cashiered army officer associated with past coups and terror campaigns who has been accused by the previous U.S. ambassador of being a

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"pathological killer" responsible for ordering the assassination of Archbishop Oscar Romero. If that sort of man is able to lead his party to even a minority role in the Constituent Assembly, the cause of democracy will not be promoted but undermined.

And ultimately, American support for such elections also undermines democratic values here in the United States. How effectively can we promote dignity and respect for competing groups in our society when our government supports a repressive regime whose actions blatantly deny such values to its own people? How effectively can we promote the belief among our own citizens that democratic methods are the best means to solve problems when our government pursues a foreign policy supportive of a regime that systematically cuts off such approaches? The lesson the citizens learn from their leaders in these circumstances might well be that the values of opposition, dissent, tolerance and respect for democratic processes are mere luxuries to be enjoyed in good times and suspended in hard times. If we are not serious about democracy abroad, how can we be sure that our own citizenry will take it seriously at home?

MORRIS BLACHMAN AND KENNETH SHARPE

Morris Blachman is an associate professor of political science at the University of South Carolina. Kenneth Sharpe is an associate professor of political science at Swarthmore College.

Nickel Diplomacy

Last July, bowing to pressure from Pretoria, President Ronald Reagan recalled the U.S. Ambassador to South Africa, William Edmondson, a Carter appointee and a career diplomat. Since then the Administration has been searching for a suitable—which is to say, more malleable—replacement, and it has finally come up with one in Herman W. Nickel, whose nomination was approved last week by the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

Nickel figures to be a sophisticated advocate of "business as usual" in apartheid South Africa. As *Fortune* magazine's Washington editor, he often railed against antiapartheid activists pressing for corporate divestment from that country. He criticized the Carter Administration for overemphasizing human rights in its dealings with South Africa. In one article he urged the United States to avoid pushing too hard for democratic reforms, calling Walter Mondale's advocacy of "one man, one vote" in South Africa "the most blatant example of counterproductive pressure." Typical of his attitude toward human rights is one article criticizing Carter for failing to support the Shah's regime in Iran: "When he [the Shah] got advice from some of his hard-line advisers to crack down hard, he was inhibited by the fear that the United States would not stand for a bloodbath."

Nickel's ambiguous association with Ernest Lefever, the discarded nominee for the State Department's human right office, raises other questions about his judgment. Lefever, you will recall, got in trouble when senators discovered that his Ethics and Public Policy Center had received a $25,000 grant from Nestlé at about the same time that it commissioned a study of infant formula marketing in the Third World. Nickel, it turns out, is the man who was supposed to write it.

Nickel claims he neither completed the study nor received any money for it. Nevertheless, he did attack the Nestlé boycott in a June 1980 *Fortune* article on "The Corporation Haters," which Lefever's center immediately reprinted and distributed, using a mailing list supplied by a Nestlé lawyer. The piece was particularly scathing toward church activists, and in a subhead branded the Interfaith Center for Corporate Responsibility—which monitors corporate behavior for 170 Roman Catholic orders and seventeen Protestant denominations—as "Marxists Marching Under the Banner of Christ."

Religious groups have been opposed to the Nickel nomination from the start. A letter to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee signed by more than thirty religious officials criticized Nickel's "record as an irresponsible and unethical journalist" and his "inflammatory and unjustified attacks on the social justice programs of the churches," and it questioned whether he will "respect the dignity of the black majority of the country in which he will serve." Willis Logan, director of the Africa Office of the National Council of Churches, testified at Nickel's confirmation hearing that Nickel "would be skilled in issuing perfunctory statements of concern about apartheid, but in fact proposes a closer and friendlier relationship with the white supremacist government of South Africa" and would cast America's lot "with the forces for continued white rule."

But Nickel is no crude apologist for untrammeled corporate profiteering from apartheid. He argues instead that U.S. investment in, and bank loans to, South Africa should work to promote peaceful change. He has said that "continued economic growth" is the "single dynamic for bringing out the contradictions of the apartheid system" and that apartheid "is incompatible with the requirements of an expanding economy." He asserts that "the emergence of a powerful trade union movement could not have been possible without the changes wrought by foreign investment." (Actually, repression has increased during periods of growing foreign investment in South Africa.) He views corporate divestment and boycott strategies as "overly simple" approaches to dealing with what is, to him, a "morally ambiguous" situation—apartheid.

Nickel, it must be said, is an astute choice for ambassador by an Administration not generally noted for the quality of its appointments. He will be able to represent American economic interests very skillfully and to reassure the South Africans that they have on hand a comfortable "business-as-usual" diplomat. Regrettably.

CAROLE COLLINS

Carole Collins, a freelance writer, is a Guest Fellow at the Institute for Policy Studies and national coordinator of the Campaign to Oppose Bank Loans to South Africa.

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DOCUMENTS.

'THE THREAT TO OUR REVOLUTION'

Nicaragua Makes Its Case

These remarks of Sergio Ramírez Mercado, one of the three members of the governing junta of Nicaragua, were delivered to an assembly of Latin American intellectuals in Managua on March 4, two weeks before the government declared a "state of emergency." They were translated for The Nation *by Darwin J. Flakoll, author of a book on the Sandinist revolution, who is now living in Nicaragua.*

SERGIO RAMÍREZ MERCADO

During the past months we in Nicaragua have witnessed an increasing number of actions and threats endangering our country and our revolution. It is not only imperial rhetoric that is being used against Nicaragua; terrorism, military preparations, the intimidation of our neighbors and the most aggressive political weapons such as blackmail and sabotage are also being employed. We can enumerate a series of events in the past few weeks alone that enable us to clarify this menacing picture.

§ The creation of the so-called "Democratic Community" of Honduras, El Salvador and Costa Rica, a North American maneuver to legitimate the use of an intervention force in the Central American area, linked to the Inter-American Treaty of Mutual Assistance. More recently, this "community" has been joined by the United States; Colombia, which has also authorized the establishment of Yankee military bases; and Guatemala. The intent to establish a political and military wall around Nicaragua is clear-cut.

§ The establishment of U.S. military bases on the island of Amapala in the Gulf of Fonseca and on San Andrés island in the Caribbean, both of them within the continental shelf waters of Nicaragua. These naval and air bases are designed to involve Nicaragua militarily along both its coasts.

§ The presence of North American warships, equipped with the most sophisticated communications apparatus, in the waters of the Gulf of Fonseca, an operation which the president of the Salvadoran junta, José Napoleón Duarte, admits having authorized.

§ The supply of money, training and arms to the bands of former Somoza National Guardsmen operating from Honduran territory, as part of a clandestine operation run by the Central Intelligence Agency. The existence of this operation was admitted by the Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs, Thomas Enders, before the intelligence committees of both houses of the U.S. Congress during the course of a secret session held last December.

In addition, President Reagan's ambassador at large, retired Gen. Vernon Walters, has been charged with making preparations throughout the Caribbean area, and veteran C.I.A. officer Nestor Sanchez, now Assistant Secretary of Defense for Inter-American Affairs, was placed in charge of the operation.

The U.S. National Security Council has approved a $19 million budget to finance military, political and economic destabilization actions against Nicaragua. It has also approved an eight-point plan of action to carry out this destabilization operation using military officers from South American countries, principally Argentina, to train former National Guardsmen and to infiltrate Nicaraguan territories as mercenaries.

As a consequence of all this terrorist activity, bands of former National Guardsmen, in alliance with Steadman Fagoth, a former Somoza security agent, were able this past December and January to organize their "Red Christmas" operation, which destroyed indigenous communities along the Coco River between Nicaragua and Honduras and created a beachhead in Nicaraguan territory. Before the revolutionary government re-established absolute control of the zone, Red Christmas resulted in the murder of nearly sixty Nicaraguans, including civilians and members of our frontier guards, army troops and security forces. Red Christmas also provoked the forced exodus of a considerable number of the indigenous communities into Honduras. National Guardsmen tortured and raped residents of the communities as well as local medical personnel.

The revolutionary government was forced to relocate the riverside communities in more secure areas of the national territory, where our Miskito brethren will have, for the first time, access to systematic medical assistance, education, adequate housing, electricity and cultivable land. This relocation has given rise to a ferocious, slanderous campaign of lies mounted by the C.I.A. and the State Department against our revolution.

State security organs of the Ministry of Interior have uncovered a plot, mounted in Costa Rica, Honduras and the United States, to blow up Nicaragua's national cement factory and petroleum refinery. Huge quantities of explosives were smuggled into the country for this purpose. One of the principals implicated in the plot confessed that he had received $50,000 from officials of the Argentine general staff and had learned that a special Argentine commando unit was to be located in Tegucigalpa to direct sabotage operations against Nicaragua.

A commercial airplane of Aeronica, the Nicaraguan national airline, was blown up in the airport of Mexico City by a time bomb that was supposed to have destroyed the plane in midflight, killing its 100 passengers.

A suitcase containing explosives blew up in the Sandino Airport terminal, killing three baggage handlers. The suitcase had been placed aboard a plane in Tegucigalpa, and this act of terrorism was designed to force cancellation of the visit of President José López Portillo of Mexico to

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Nicaragua. It was only by fortuitous accident that the explosion failed to kill the dozens of passengers who were waiting nearby for their luggage.

As can be seen, all weapons of terror, aggression and barefaced international propaganda are being activated. Former National Guardsmen are being used for assassination and massacre after having been armed and trained on North American territory as well as in Honduras and Guatemala. No scruples were permitted to stand in the way of bringing Steadman Fagoth to Washington, D.C., where he appeared before Congressional committees and human rights groups so that State Department spokesmen might repeat his lies. Freedom House and the Institute of Religion and Democracy, both of which are C.I.A. fronts,* were used, as well as *Le Figaro* and Radio 15th of September, located in Honduran territory. Newspapers and radio stations in Central America and throughout the entire continent are fed a steady diet of all these lies.

Faced with this increasing aggression, faced with the imminent peril of an escalation of this aggression, our revolution has responded with maturity and serenity. We are a firmly committed people. We will never retreat in the face of any threat, but we have given evidence—and we will continue to do so—that we desire a global understanding in favor of peace in Central America, bringing stability and security to our region. . . .

An ordinary North American father wrote to President Calvin Coolidge in 1927 after his son, a Marine, had died in the mountains of Las Segovias in Nicaragua in combat with the Army for the Defense of National Sovereignty, commanded by Gen. Augusto César Sandino. In his letter to Coolidge he said that his son had died unjustly in Nicaragua, fighting unjustly against a people who had never offered a single offense to the United States and, what was worse, fighting to defend interests that were not even his own: the interests of Yankee bankers, hegemonical interests that were of no concern to the North American people. And General Sandino said in 1928 to a correspondent of *The Nation*, Carleton Beales: "If the American people had not been dulled to justice and the elementary rights of humanity, they would not so easily have forgotten their own past, when a handful of ragged soldiers marched through the snow, leaving bloody tracks behind them, to gain their liberty and independence. If their consciences had not been hardened by materialistic enrichment, the Americans would not have forgotten so easily that a nation, sooner or later and however weak it may be, will obtain its liberty, and that each abuse of power hastens the destruction of those who employ it." □

*When contacted by *The Nation*, both Leonard Sussman, executive director of Freedom House, and Penn Kemble, a member of the executive committee of the Institute of Religion and Democracy, denied this charge.

ARTICLES.

THREE MORE STATES TO GO

The Dangers Of a 'Runaway Convention'

LAWRENCE M. BASKIR

Earlier this year, while almost no one was paying attention, Alaska became the thirty-first state to adopt a petition calling for a constitutional convention to draw up an amendment forcing the Federal government to operate on a balanced budget. A strong effort is now under way in Ohio, Michigan, Washington, Missouri and Kentucky to pass similar measures, a prospect likely to be enhanced by the current public storm over President Reagan's projected multi-billion-dollar deficits. And if at least thirty-four states do adopt such petitions, the Constitution mandates that Congress "shall call a convention for proposing amendments," at which point a truly dangerous game is afoot.

The reason for apprehension—and it has been voiced every time the prospect of a constitutional convention has loomed in the last few years—is that there are no legal bounds as to what such a convention can do. It can limit itself to a single amendment such as the budget-balancing proposal, whose merits are doubtful but hardly outrageous, or it can propose the entire constitutional agenda of the radical right. Only the good sense of the delegates—and the knowledge that three-fourths of the states would have to ratify any changes—would keep the convention from running away with its power to propose amendments on any subject it wished. Then the country would be just one step away from a revolution, accomplished in conformity with the Constitution.

We have had such a runaway convention once before in our history. The Philadelphia congress of 1787 was authorized only to propose amendments to the Articles of Confederation and wound up creating an entire new system of government: a happy outcome, but not a reassuring precedent. Perhaps that is why the Constitution's provisions for an amending convention have never been carried out before.

In the past, the mere threat of a convention has been enough to get a recalcitrant Congress to act. The Seventeenth Amendment, providing for direct election of senators, for example, was proposed by Congress only after thirty states petitioned for a convention on the change; in

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the early 1970s, the threat of a petition drive by a number of governors convinced Congress to enact revenue-sharing legislation. And the National Taxpayers Union, the conservative lobby behind the current push for a new amendment, acknowledges that the petition drive is essentially part of a strategy to force Congress to draft its own budget amendment.

But we are in the thick of a game of constitutional chicken. If Congress fails to act and the three needed state petitions are forthcoming, we will be faced with a host of problems and uncertainties, all serious and divisive. Is the convention limited in time and purpose, or can it sit indefinitely, churning out amendments as it wishes? How do we insure that it sticks to the subject of a balanced budget? If it strays into other areas—strips the Supreme Court of jurisdiction over so-called "social issues," puts God back into the classroom and takes blacks out, defines life as beginning at conception—could Congress veto these proposed amendments and keep them from being submitted to the states for ratification?

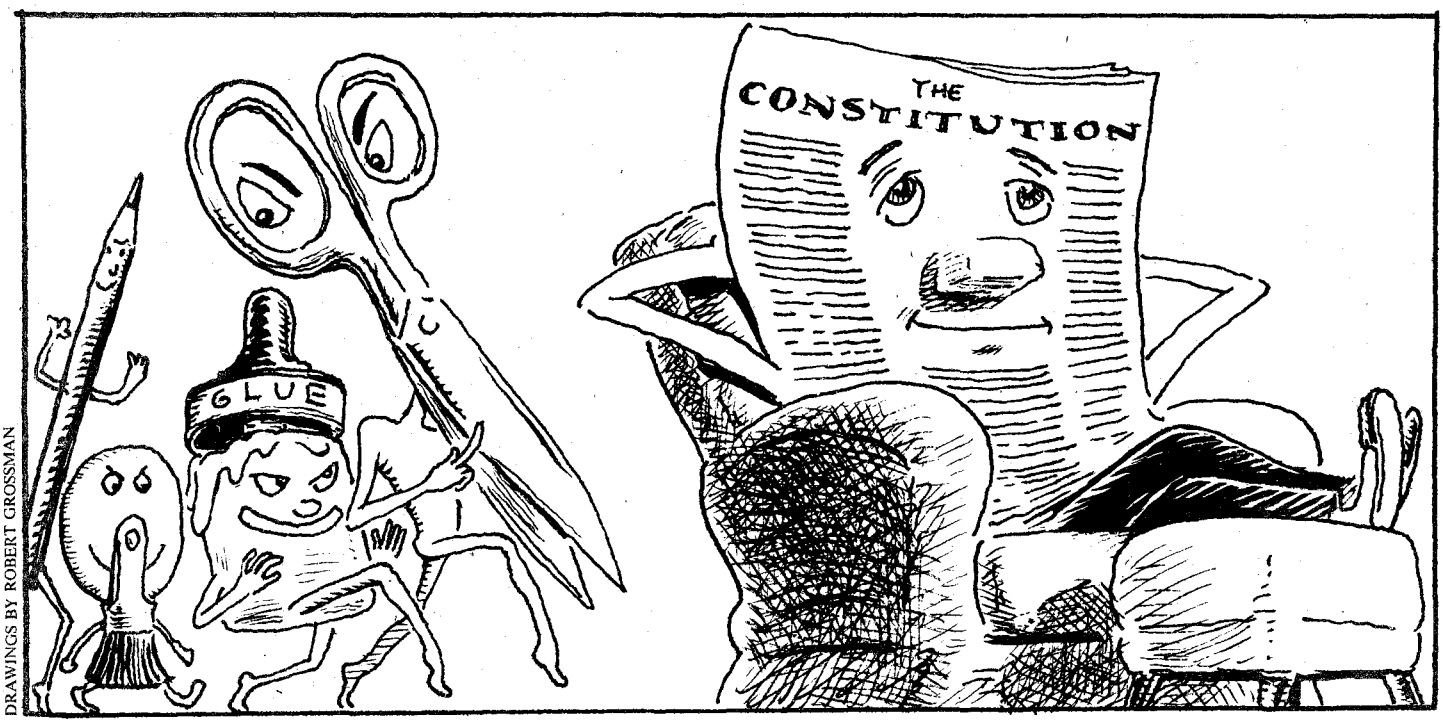
To be valid, the petitions probably have to satisfy only three tests. First, they all should call for an amendment on essentially the same subject. Although the thirty-one petitions thus far submitted on a balanced budget vary in their language, their intent is obviously the same. Congress would be splitting technical hairs if it decided to discard some of them because of differences in language. The petitions easily satisfy the first test.

Second, the petitions should be, in legal terms, "contemporaneous," reflecting some fairly current desire on the part of the states for constitutional change. There is general legal agreement that to meet this test, all petitions should be submitted within a period of at least five years but no more than fifteen. Although nothing is specified in the Constitution itself, seven years has traditionally been regarded as the time that states have to ratify those amendments proposed by Congress, the understanding being that this is a reasonable amount of time for citizens to register their positions. Interestingly, it is the battle over the Equal Rights Amendment that has mucked up this previously accepted tradition.

In 1978 Congress extended the seven-year limit on ratification of the E.R.A. for another three and a quarter years. Then in a controversial decision last December, Federal Judge Marion Callister of Idaho ruled that the extension was invalid and that the seven-year limit should be applied. Naturally, the Callister decision came in for a good bit of criticism from supporters of the amendment [see editorial, "Judgment Day On E.R.A.," *The Nation*, January 2-9], but those very critics might now have second thoughts. For if that decision holds—it is to be reviewed by the Supreme Court this year—then the threat of a balanced-budget convention may soon recede. Of the thirty-one states that have so far passed petitions, twelve acted in the mid-1970s; under a seven-year-limitation rule, four state petitions would expire this year, eight more next year.

The third validity test has to do with the effect of rescissions by states that reconsider their original requests and withdraw their petitions. That has not happened so far and there is no apparent movement for it, but it did happen fifteen years ago in the campaign to overturn the Supreme Court's reapportionment decisions and again in the last few years with the E.R.A. And the central question—whether a state withdrawal is legitimate—remains to be answered. Here too there is considerable controversy, here too Judge Callister's views are relevant, and here too E.R.A. supporters might find themselves in something of a dilemma.

Judge Callister ruled in the E.R.A. case that states have the power to pass and retract ratifications as they wish, until there are thirty-eight states with current ratifications on



DRAWINGS BY ROBERT GROSSMAN

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record. His argument, to me persuasive, is that if the guiding principle of the amending process is to register a consensus for change, a second and possibly more reflective look at a proposal should not be precluded. Much can happen after a period of initial enthusiasm for a constitutional amendment: its defects may become clearer, events may prove it unnecessary or dangerous, the weight of public opinion may shift. Denying the validity of state rescissions can lead to the anomalous and undesirable situation of adding an amendment to the Constitution that the country does not really want. Only by permitting states to withdraw earlier ratifications can we give proper effect to the democratic process.

And if this is true with actual amendments, it is much more so with petitions for a convention to propose amendments. There is every reason to honor a state legislature's decision to revise or nullify its earlier petition.

If Judge Callister's decision stands, he may have done the country a large and unintended favor when he dealt the E.R.A. its probably fatal blow. Unfortunately, it must be added that he also committed the cardinal sin of judicial activism—a sin which regularly seduces judges both liberal and conservative—by improperly intruding into an arena left by the Constitution to Congress, the states and the political process. What the Constitution ought to contain is ultimately the most important of all matters of public policy. It is no business of the courts. Questions of whether petitions are properly worded, how long they are valid, whether an amendment has been properly proposed and expediently ratified are for the political process to resolve. It is "we, the people," who did once "ordain and establish this Constitution," and it is the people, not Judge Callister, Chief Justice Warren Burger or their colleagues, who are to write or rewrite it.

What then are we to do about the looming constitutional convention and the dangers it poses? Untidy as the answer is, we must look primarily to Congress. Congress has the constitutional power to write into law basic rules for states to follow in submitting petitions and for any convention to follow in seeking constitutional change. It should provide devices to prevent any convention from straying from its legitimate but limited purpose—and do so before we are faced with a crisis on the budget-balancing petitions.

A bill on constitutional convention procedures was in fact overwhelmingly passed several times by the Senate in the 1970s in response to the reapportionment drive. It was written by former Senator Sam Ervin with the help of eminent constitutional scholars, and it was supported by an unlikely coalition that included Everett Dirksen and Roman Hruska, Ted Kennedy and Birch Bayh. A much-modified version written by Senator Orrin Hatch is now awaiting action in the Judiciary Committee, but it suffers from an evident desire to make the convention process too easy and to permit any forthcoming convention to address certain other amendments Hatch supports. Congress ought to go back to the original bill and enact it while the constitutional crisis is still only a threat, thereby safeguarding our most important national treasure. □

LETTER FROM POLAND

The Voices of Quiet Resistance

GUSTAW MOSZCZ

Warsaw

So far there has been no popular uprising against Poland's martial-law government nor is there any sign of one, but there has been a remarkable outpouring of clandestine bulletins all over the country, offering visible evidence of some genuine popular resistance. By the latest count at least twenty such bulletins are published in Warsaw alone and more than 1,700 independently organized, printed and distributed underground leaflets are produced in the rest of the country.

The number of underground bulletins, their steadily improving technical quality and the resulting successful and rapid dissemination of information continue to provide serious problems for the junta. Intellectuals may be behind most of the clandestine press, but the bulk of the readership seems to be the industrial proletariat. In fact, one of Warsaw's leading bulletins, *Wiadomosci* (*News*), is distributed only within factories. This indicates a certain radicalization of the Polish working class that is entirely beyond the control of the Communist Party and may represent the biggest obstacle the regime faces in its self-appointed task of dragging the country back into quasi-Stalinist political passivity.

By far the most impressive of all the bulletins that have come my way is the latest one from Warsaw, *Tygodnik Mazowsze* (*Mazowsze Weekly*), which claims to be the first "official" underground Solidarity paper. It is also notable in having in its first issue an interview with the 28-year-old chairman of Warsaw Solidarity, Zbigniew Bujak, who avoided being captured by the army in December purely by chance. Bujak outlines his plans for Solidarity's future and hints at what he believes to have been past errors. Terming the union a "colossus with clay legs," he argues that the task is now to give it legs of iron, and says this can be done if it adopts a "minimal program" excluding all sensitive political and social issues. Instead of a large organization with a high public profile, he says, Solidarity should dissolve into the factories and refuse to elect national or even local committees; workers' demands should be presented to management by a single elected delegate in each factory.

While such a policy declaration might be a tacit recognition of Solidarity's current frailty and the severe limitations the regime will likely put on union activity in the future, this sort of minimal program is obviously not going to do much to inspire the kind of overwhelming popularity Solidarity once achieved, nor is it going to be particularly welcome in the factories. Whatever new trade union regulations the

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government may establish, they will certainly restrict strike action to an absolute minimum and therefore deny protection to individual Solidarity members who might be victimized because of union activity. Once the first two or three workers find themselves out of a job after acting as worker representatives, others inside the factory, it is safe to say, will be extremely reluctant to martyr themselves as well.

But even this Bujak vision of the future seems far too optimistic to fit the realities of Poland. As of now it is not certain that Solidarity will re-emerge at all. Journalists, academics, judges, teachers and other professionals have been told to renounce their membership in Solidarity or face the threat of being fired. Nine hundred of the approximately 4,000 judges in Poland were members of Solidarity, and they were recently told that unless they left the union they would be fired for being "too unreliable"; so far 200 have refused to quit. The few journals and magazines that have reappeared to date have had their staffs thoroughly examined and their "unreliable elements" removed. The rector of Poznan University has already been dismissed, and rectors in Torun, Warsaw, Lublin and elsewhere, all elected during Solidarity's heyday, are under considerable pressure. At Warsaw University the Communist Party committee has been fired and its new First Secretary, a colonel, has ordered that lists of the staff and students be drawn up detailing their duties and how well they are being performed, a probable first step toward expelling or firing those seen as "unreliable."

Roundups of students also continue; fifty students were arrested in Lublin in mid-February (many were later released). Student activists are kept under tight control and the pace of student protest is slowing down. During January and February, students in Wroclaw and Warsaw displayed lighted signs from the windows of their dormitories comparing members of the Military Council to parts of the male anatomy. Reprisal was swift: the culprits were permanently ejected from their rooms.

Though it is difficult to follow all its operations, Solidarity has certainly not died. One week before martial law was declared, three Solidarity members in Wroclaw withdrew 80 million zlotys ($1 million) from the union fund in the state bank there, and it is assumed this huge sum is being used to sustain some Solidarity activities. In addition, at least 30 percent of the national leadership escaped the clutches of the military in December.

One crucial factor, about which it is frankly impossible to get objective information, is the state of the economy. The full impact of the enormous January price rises, averaging 400 percent, is now beginning to be felt, and the average monthly salary of 9,000 zlotys ($112.50) is clearly insufficient for most families. A new Fiat sedan costs about 500,000 zlotys and a round-trip flight to the United States about 80,000 zlotys. Most consumer goods are now far beyond the reach of many people.

According to the regime, coal production has reached new heights since the imposition of military rule, but this is not quite as impressive as it sounds. For one thing, many Polish factories rely on imported raw materials that are no longer coming into the country—the Inowraclaw glassware complex, for example, will be shutting down this month—and no amount of coal production is going to help them. In addition, many foreign buyers of Polish coal have placed their contracts elsewhere since martial law, and so much of the newly produced coal is now piling up in the shipyards around Gdansk.

While the value of the zloty declines, the farmers of Poland seem inclined to hold on to what they consider *real* currency, grain. The reaction of most private farmers—more than 80 percent of the country's agricultural sector—to the regime's exhortations to fulfill more state grain contracts has been one of disdain. Despite a good harvest last year, farmers near the northern city of Olsztyn, for example, have failed notably to supply the grain they contracted to sell to the government: of 13,000 farmers, only 4,000 fulfilled their contracts, 4,000 more fulfilled only half and 5,000 supplied nothing at all.

The thousand pinpricks coming from the underground bulletins, combined with the downward slide of the economy, may yet compel the regime's hard-liners to seek some kind of compromise. So far, however, they show themselves to be in no mood for such a solution, and few Solidarity activists express more than pessimistic determination to continue the pressure. □

SOLIDARITY VS. THE COMMUNISTS

How Far Could The Party Go?

MICHAEL MANLEY

I realize that any practicing politician who comments on events in a Communist country with anything approaching objectivity runs a great risk, but several points must be made for a proper understanding of the issues involved in the long Polish agony.

To begin with, it is fair to say that of all the countries of the Socialist bloc in Eastern Europe, Poland was the worst run. In any society organized on Marxist-Leninist lines, the role of the political party is critical because the party itself is supreme, profoundly involved in every aspect of the country's economic and social life. A well-led, well-organized Communist Party with relatively strong democratic processes and a high level of integrity will govern reasonably well. A badly led, poorly organized party will invite a disaster.

The Communist Party of Poland was an example of the latter. It is said to have accumulated a record of in-

Michael Manley, the former Prime Minister of Jamaica, is the leader of the opposition People's National Party.

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competence, even corruption, unequaled in the Socialist bloc, making it inevitable that the people would rise up sooner or later in protest and defiance. This is quite different from such earlier disruptions as those in Hungary and Czechoslovakia, which were led by people who wanted to liberalize the system and were aimed at change that Western liberal democracies would regard as natural and right but that traditional Communist regimes would regard as revisionist and counterrevolutionary. In Poland it was not a case of the intelligentsia seeking to introduce elements of liberal democracy into a system based on different foundations. Here the proletariat itself—dockworkers, coal miners, steelworkers, transport workers and others—simply refused to continue to tolerate the incompetence and the corruption of their system.

Solidarity and its leader, Lech Walesa, emerged from this protest to channel and lead the energies of popular resistance in terms of specific demands for change. Strike followed strike and economic difficulties multiplied, but real gains were made. Solidarity demanded its own newspaper and access to the state media. It won. Solidarity demanded greater worker control and internal democracy at the workplace. It won. Solidarity demanded that the state purge itself of its more corrupt and incompetent functionaries. It won. The Communist Party, reacting to this pressure, began to clean house: several members of both the top and the lower echelons of the party were dismissed from their posts and replaced.

For a time it seemed that genuine democratic progress was being made, even at the cost of the deterioration of the Polish economy. Then things began to get out of hand. It became increasingly clear that Walesa was losing his grip on Solidarity—whether because of pressure in his own ranks or external manipulation or perhaps a bit of both—and that the union was moving toward confrontation not about the reform of the state but about its abolition, not about the cleansing of the institutions of state power but about the sharing of state power with Solidarity.

With the best will in the world, no one can reasonably expect any Communist Party to share state power when challenged by an organization that uses such a direct action as the strike. If you challenge state power in that way, you must be able to remove those who currently hold that power or suffer the consequences. Obviously the Polish Communist Party could not be asked to share state power, and if the confrontation was pressed, something would have to give. The declaration of martial law, therefore, was a direct response to a challenge that was no longer about shortages or management, no longer about worker democracy or corruption, but about state power itself. Once that battle is joined, it is a matter of survival.

Naturally, one hopes that after the end of martial law, Solidarity will have learned this lesson and will adopt a less confrontational policy, remembering that it is one thing to use direct action to fight for reforms, but another thing to use direct action to challenge state power itself. Then the creative possibilities of the Polish situation may be once again reborn and the long agony ended at last. □

HOW THE 'NETWORK' WORKS

The New Right's Campus Press

FRAN R. SCHUMER

This past January *The American Spectator* and the neoconservative Institute for Educational Affairs sponsored a conference in New York City for college students interested in starting or maintaining conservative newspapers on their campuses. Two years ago such an event might have attracted only a few participants, but that was before the boom in campus conservatism. More than forty students from schools as diverse as Harvard, the University of Chicago, Holy Cross and the University of Louisville attended the one-day meeting at the New York City Athletic Club. Many of these students had already launched successful publishing ventures; others came at the invitation of the sponsors to learn how to do so.

Conservative students have long been out of favor on campuses, and only the recent ascendancy of conservatives to national power has alleviated their ostracism. As a result, the conference took on the atmosphere of an exile's return. Participants talked far less about the nuts and bolts of putting out a newspaper than they did about plans for uprooting the liberal orthodoxy they see as still entrenched on most campuses. Such speakers as *The Spectator*'s R. Emmett Tyrrell Jr., *Harper's* contributor Tom Bethell and I.E.A. executive director Philip Marcus counseled the student editors in matters of taste and tactics ("Don't print K.K.K. literature"), armed them for ideological battle ("If someone accuses you of being a racist or a sexist, accuse them back of McCarthy tactics") and gave them the confidence to fight ("We're winners now").

No doubt the introduction of a second point of view on campuses where liberalism has held sway was inevitable, even healthy. But the conference did illuminate the interesting fact that the new student right is less a spontaneous outgrowth of campus sentiment than the carefully nurtured product of the New Right's increasing awareness of the importance of university students. The purpose of the conference, in the words of its sponsors, was not so much to give students journalistic guidance, although that was available, as it was to "solidify the growing network of conservative support" around them. To that end, they were told of all the ideological and financial support available.

There are some thirty conservative university-affiliated newspapers now being published. Some have been stirred to life by the same political winds that swept Ronald Reagan into office, but others have been coaxed into existence by a

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well-heeled network of conservative publications, corporate philanthropies and neoconservative activists.

Chief among these patrons is the I.E.A., which, operating as a sort of Ministry of Propaganda for the neoconservative camp, has prepared the soil for corporate largess in academia [see Peter H. Stone, "Teaching the 'Right' Stuff," *The Nation*, September 19, 1981]. In 1980, the I.E.A. gave $5,000 to *Counterpoint*, a journal at the University of Chicago started by John Podhoretz, son of *Commentary* editor Norman Podhoretz, and $27,000 to the *St. John's Review*, a formerly apolitical journal associated with St. John's College in Annapolis, Maryland, whose pages now feature occasional articles by conservative scholars. The next year, the institute increased its efforts, dispensing approximately $5,000 each to fledgling conservative publications at Harvard, Yale, the University of Chicago and the Claremont Colleges in California.

Until the entrance of the I.E.A. into student publishing ventures, none of the major college papers, conservative or otherwise, had received foundation or corporate support, according to a study done at Northwestern University. (Some campus newspapers operate independently of their schools, raising money from advertising and sales; most rely on student fees or university stipends.) The I.E.A.'s appearance on campus has cleared the way for other foundations to sponsor campus journals, including the John M. Olin Foundation, the Scaife Family Charitable Trusts and several less well known trusts (Scovill, Kilpatrick, Pfizer). These benefactors appear to offer little by way of editorial guidance; their main purpose, according to former I.E.A. program officer Mark Greenberg, is to "start new papers and keep existing ones from being precarious." The only requirement for obtaining funds is that the paper not be liberal.

The origins of the new conservative student papers vary greatly. *The Gavel*, published by the Cleveland-Marshall College of Law, had been a liberal paper for more than a decade until its management fell to a group of energetic conservative students who completely changed its tone. Other papers, such as the Harvard *Salient*, have come about through the vigorous intervention of outside groups. A year ago, then-I.E.A. board member Christopher DeMuth, who is now an official at the Office of Management and Budget, urged graduate student Terry Quist to come to New York to meet institute members. "We were impressed with Terry and encouraged him to go back to Harvard and get things rolling," said Greenberg. Quist enlisted the aid of several conservative faculty members, among them Edward Banfield and Richard Pipes, and helped a small group of undergraduates draft a grant proposal. The result was *The Salient*, which published its first three issues last fall.

The Dartmouth Review traces its origins not to the growth of conservative sentiment on campus but to the difficulty of airing unpopular views in *The Dartmouth*, the student daily. After being removed from *The Dartmouth* as a consequence of his conservative views, Gregory Fossedal appealed for help to Dartmouth professor and *National Review* editor Jeffrey Hart. In a half-hour on the telephone, Hart had raised enough money for Fossedal to start *The Dartmouth Review*. Chief among *The Review*'s early patrons was alumnus George Champion, the retired chairman of Chase Manhattan Bank, who had long made known his dissatisfaction with what he saw as Dartmouth's liberal tendencies. Within a week of receiving its sponsorship, the first issue of what is now the most controversial college newspaper hit the stands.

The Review has been something of a phenomenon in the annals of campus journalism. Its racy style, fluid prose and ribald humor wrested a large number of readers from its relatively pallid competitor; it attracted a following not so much because of its rightist politics but because, as one undergraduate said, "we wanted to see what they would do next." The paper sponsored a beauty pageant to select a Carnival Queen, honored Phyllis Schlafly and, on the day that many students fasted in support of OxFam, the world hunger relief organization, it picked up the tab for a champagne and lobster brunch to which the whole campus was invited. *The Review* may be the only campus paper whose judgment on matters of taste is more offensive to undergraduates than to alumni. An interview with a Ku Klux Klansman was illustrated with a picture of a black hanging by a noose from a tree. Other examples of *Review* humor: "Genocide is never having to say you're sorry," a quote from an anonymous student, and, "A hippie is someone who looks like Tarzan, walks like Jane and smells like Cheetah," a quote from President Reagan.

In a style reminiscent of CREEP, *Review* editors last spring obtained a confidential membership list and meeting notes of the Dartmouth Gay Student Alliance. They then printed the names of the club's officers. One of the students whose name was printed, an 18-year-old freshman, called the paper to disavow any connection with the group; *The Review* responded by publishing photostats of the stolen files, proving the student's affiliation. "We hated to do it but we did have our credibility to think about," said *Review* chairman Keeney Jones. The student has since taken a leave from school. The grandfather of another student, himself a Dartmouth alumnus, discovered his grandson was gay only when he received his copy of *The Review* in the mail. Undergraduates held a rally to protest against *The Review*; the editors responded by sponsoring a croquet tournament, which they attended in Gatsby-style attire.

Despite its tactics, *The Review* has become the puckish mascot of the New Right. Its progress has been cheered in the pages of *The National Review*—"Let the battle rage"—and President Reagan has sent the paper a letter of endorsement, which it uses to solicit subscriptions. Its board of advisers includes Representative Jack Kemp, syndicated columnist Patrick Buchanan and *National Review* publisher William Rusher. It has a comfortable $100,000 annual budget, one third of which comes from advertising, one third from grants (I.E.A. and the John M. Olin Foundation have both given $10,000) and one third from alumni, including Champion, who commented that in his day,

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"we'd have thrown the gays off campus."

Not all conservative campus newspapers admire *The Review*'s tactics, but many hope to duplicate its success. *The Review* inspired students at Princeton to start *The Madison Report*, and that in turn encouraged students at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill to launch their own conservative journal. *The Review* has also been active in disseminating funding information, including a list of fifty-three corporations and foundations interested in giving financial support to conservative campus papers. (The list named the Hoover Institution, the Adolph Coors Foundation, Atlantic Richfield and A.T.&T., among others.)

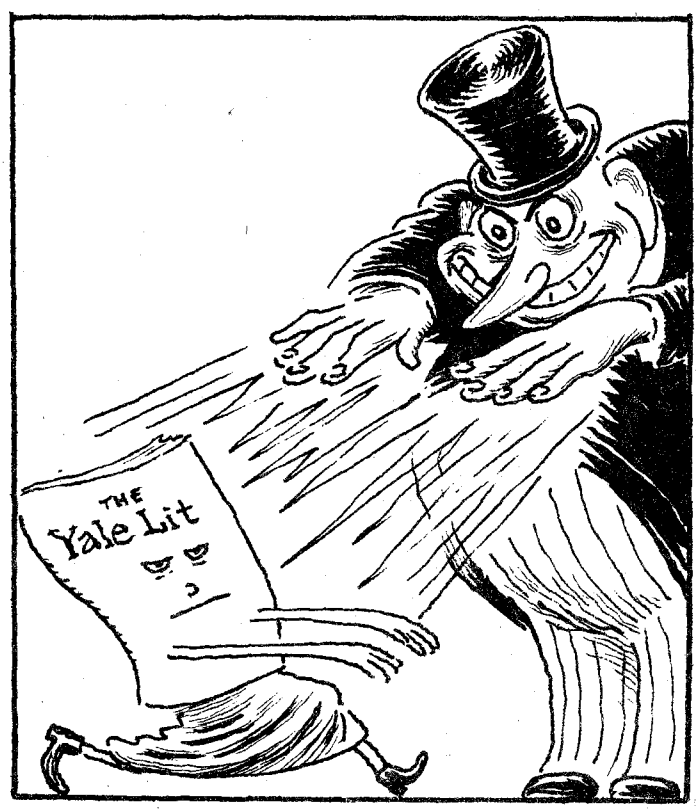
Whether or not they have foundation backing, the new conservative papers maintain their editorial independence and as a result represent a broad spectrum of conservative ideas. The Harvard *Salient* is fairly typical of the Ivy League papers in its political range. "If we had an enemies list, it would contain Brezhnev, Ted Kennedy, Arafat and F.D.R.," says student editor Michael Lendon. A heroes list would include Theodore Roosevelt, Alexander Haig, Reagan and Pope John Paul II ("for his efforts to stop the liberalizing drift in the Church"). Most of the papers have sharply anti-Soviet views and are vehemently opposed to affirmative action for gays, women or blacks. "Girl" is *de rigueur* for "woman" in some; in others, women's studies are characterized as "lesbian studies." The inevitable anti-affirmative action article is usually written by a black and the antiabortion one by a woman. (While there are women on the staffs of most of these publications, there may not be many blacks: of the forty students who attended the I.E.A. conference, two were women, not one was black.)

The journals range in style from the sophisticated to the very coarse. The less polished examples are usually the ones without corporate support, not because foundations have turned them down—the I.E.A. has yet to reject a grant proposal from a nonliberal student paper—but because prior to the I.E.A. conference, few editors knew it was possible even to apply for funding.

As with editors at most other undergraduate journals, student editors at the new conservative papers are unpaid, and except for the occasional typesetter or business manager, most papers are student-run. The *Yale Literary Magazine* (known as the *Lit*) is the one exception to this rule. For years a first-rate literary journal (it published the works of Archibald MacLeish, Robert Penn Warren, Sinclair Lewis, Rudyard Kipling and Stephen Vincent Benet, among others), the *Lit* was a student-operated venture which existed on a shoestring. In the late 1970s, when it ran out of money, it was bought for $1 by Andrei Navrozov, a 25-year-old Yale graduate who is the son of a prolific and fiercely anti-Soviet émigré. Navrozov proceeded to fill the *Lit*'s pages with the works of little-known Eastern European poets and interviews with people he regarded as leading intellectuals (i.e., George Gilder), but mostly it became the forum for his father's anti-Soviet tirades. Navrozov was overwhelmingly successful in raising funds for the *Lit*. With a yearly budget of $250,000, its benefactors include Paul Mellon, the Scaife Family Charitable Trusts, the John M. Olin Foundation, the Wilmot Wheeler Foundation and Pfizer Inc. Irving Kristol, William Simon, Frank Shakespeare, Robert Bork and George Will are on its advisory committee, and Commerce Secretary Malcolm Baldrige sits on its board of patrons.

Former *Lit* editors Brendan Gill and John Hersey, who bemoan its political reincarnation, have joined others in questioning the propriety of letting the journal drift out of student hands, but Yale officials have been reluctant to act against the publication for fear of being called anti-right. While the *Lit* is unpopular at Yale—*The Yale Daily News* ran an unfavorable series on it—it has won a good deal of praise from the corporate world. "It is unique in our national intellectual life," said Reginald Jones, chairman of General Electric. Malcolm Brachman, owner of the Northwest Oil Co. of Texas, called it "a very worthwhile enterprise," and C. Davis Weyerhaeuser, chairman of Comerco, said that "it is refreshing to see something that has not bowed to the demand to be competitively priced." (The *Lit*, which sells for $6 per issue, is raising its price to $8.)

Conservative college newspapers are hardly a new phenomenon. Ten years ago, the *Badger-Herald* was started in reaction to the more radical *Daily Cardinal* at the University of Wisconsin. *The American Spectator* itself was the outgrowth of a student paper at Indiana University in the 1960s. Shifts in ideology are a natural part of university life. The only difference now is that the growth of conservative college papers is in part the result of the elaborate life-support system that conservative groups have set up for them. And awareness that such a system exists is spreading. New proposals for grants from students at the University of California at San Diego, Columbia and the University of



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Michigan at Ann Arbor are now awaiting review at I.E.A. headquarters.

At the same time, the foundations are looking for papers that have not yet made use of the network. Only 4.3 percent of the I.E.A. budget goes to conservative college journals, but members say it is not inconceivable that the board will soon triple that amount. Other foundations are considering similar plans.

Both newspapers and universities attempt, in theory, to limit the extent to which market forces determine what they print and what they teach. One does this in the name of freedom of the press; the other, in the name of academic freedom. The more outside groups infiltrate these two spheres, the less likely the survival of either freedom. □

Ignorance

(*Continued From Front Cover*)

many good minds been so rigorously devoted to such narrow objectives.

But just as the elevation of a conservative to the Presidency has magnified the contradictions in economic and foreign policies that were once theoretical and academic, it has done the same for the conservative approach to knowledge. Ronald Reagan is attempting to turn ignorance into public policy. From this attempt there is much to learn about how conservatives view concepts like information and truth.

The President recently delivered a discourse on the meaning of truth. Speaking at the fortieth anniversary celebration of the Voice of America, he called upon his experience as a sports broadcaster in Illinois. Word would come over the wire that a ground ball had been hit to second base. "Dutch" Reagan would tell his listeners: "It's a hard-hit ball down toward second base. The shortstop is going over after the ball and makes a wild stab, picks it up, turns and gets him out just in time." Commenting on his embellishments, Reagan told his fellow communicators: "Now, I submit to you that I told the truth. . . . The truth got there and, in other words, it can be attractively packaged."

What are a few numbers between friends? If the President's budget advisers deliberately increase the projected growth of the economy in order to reduce an unpalatable deficit, they are telling the truth, merely in a more attractive package. If the figures on Soviet military spending are incorrect, taken out of context or otherwise distorted, it is only to make them even more true. Truth, in short, lies in the intention. Since Reagan's goals are, to him, honorable, then any statements that help realize them are true and any that hinder this are false. It is, to be blunt, an instrumental conception of truth, one developed in the propaganda wars that brought the right to power and sharing the right-wing vision of a world under siege.

Alan Wolfe, a member of The Nation*'s editorial board, is author of* America's Impasse: The Rise and Fall of the Politics of Growth *(Pantheon).*

Conservatives are often dismissed as know-nothings who care not a whit for ideas. On the contrary, the New Right can more properly be described as know-everything, and it has thought long and hard about ideas. Indeed, no other group in America takes ideas as *seriously* as the New Right, which is part of the problem: its ideas are lead weights pressing down on its intelligence. They are weapons. To betray any weakness in fighting with them is to undermine one's cause.

Reed Irvine runs an outfit called Accuracy in Media with the aim of countering the voluminous communist propaganda that infiltrates America's major news outlets. Are ideas important to him? "It was with words and ideas that our enemies frustrated our military might in Korea and Vietnam," he has written. "They demonstrated the continuing validity of the old adage, 'The pen is mightier than the sword.' Their target was the morale of both our troops in the field and our civilian population, but especially the latter." Many of my friends did argue that the Vietnamese were winning the war because their ideology was superior to the West's, but I think most of them believed that, in the long run, weapons counted most. Not Reed Irvine. Words, to him, can kill. The first point to note about the New Right's approach to ideas is the power it assigns them.

It follows from this, then, that the process of communicating these ideas cannot be haphazard. The New Right is dedicated to the clear and direct communication of its ideas, even to the point where I think it fair to say that it spends far more time communicating them than formulating them. (The opposite is true of the left, where turgid prose, rigid academic formalism and structuralist jargon unfortunately mar often brilliant analysis.) The mailings I receive from New Right groups are extremely well presented. Short press releases summarize the contents of studies not really expected to be read, colorful graphics illustrate the major points. Magazines are glossy and well laid out.

All of this is admirable; the left could certainly benefit from a concern with presentation. But the point is that the method of expression comes first and the ideas afterward. Form determines content, not the other way around. The New Right has developed simple-minded ideas not just because it is simple-minded, but because its reliance on attractive packaging demands it.

A movement so concerned with the presentation of its ideas easily becomes obsessed with the communication tactics of its antagonists. Since the days of the Liberty Lobby during the New Deal, the right has dutifully watched the left, monitoring its funds, carefully reading its magazines (more carefully, I am sure, than anyone else) and keeping track of its writers. Characteristic of this effort is *Target America*, a book by James L. Tyson, with an introduction by the vigilant Reed Irvine, that I discovered in an airport bookstore. The aim of this volume is, like Irvine's Accuracy in Media, to expose the influence of communist propaganda on the U.S. media. Tyson, a former executive at Time Inc. and I.B.M., is a freelance intelligence operative, connected

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to such outfits as the National Committee for a Responsible Patriotism, the Institute of Propaganda Analysis and the American Security Council.

Target America is another of those by-now familiar attacks on liberal institutions for following a procommunist line, but what is interesting is not its conclusion but its epistemology. How do we know what we know about communism? Good positivist that he is, Tyson answers the question by looking at results. If a particular writer consistently puts forward a line that the Russians put forward, this is "certainly strong evidence that he is being useful to the U.S.S.R." In its section on methodology, the book suggests two ways to ascertain communist influence. One is called the balance-sheet method, which evaluates a journalist's articles to determine their "communist propaganda," with those supporting the communist line in one column and those opposing it in another. (Some scores: Seymour Hirsch, 0-26; Gareth Porter, 0-17; Morton Halperin, 0-19.) The second method is called the case-history approach, and it traces the way issues like the neutron bomb or Cambodia were handled by selected media. Its aim is to find treatments that "have been based so clearly on *false information* and at the same time to have *followed the Communist line so closely* that it must have been the work either of agents or of Communist infiltration."

Interestingly, for the New Right, ideas are too important to be left to the market. While the quest for profit can safely be placed in private hands, the quest for knowledge cannot be. Private-sector propaganda-fighters like Tyson, no matter how sincere, are not sufficient. The government itself, now that the Reagan Administration is in charge, is taking over the cudgels of the New Right knowledge vigilantes. The ideas it puts forth are not especially complicated, but for all of that they are taken very seriously, without much humility and with little esprit. And a great deal of time and effort is being spent to communicate them, as if without the time and effort no one would deign to believe them.

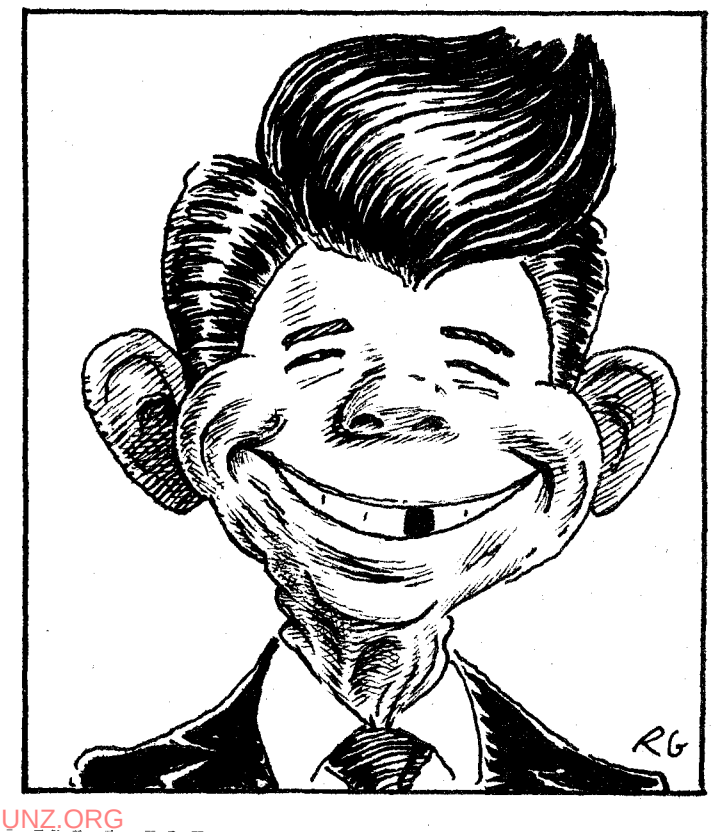
Ronald Reagan's approach to knowledge can be broken down into three parts. First, there is direct diseducation—an assault, when you get right down to it, on the Western intellectual tradition. Second, to fill the gap caused by the first, there is re-education, a vigorous assertion of the right of the state to engage in propaganda. Finally, to make the second possible, there is the discrediting, when not the actual suppressing, of pluralism of ideas. The result is the denigration of reason in the name of rationality, the elevation of ignorance as a byproduct of liberty.

I sometimes think that when future generations study the lunacy of the Reagan years, wondering how an entire population could have given itself over so thoroughly to absurdity, the textbook example used to characterize the period will be the Administration's assault on education. Why, they will wonder, at a time when the United States was losing its technological lead over the rest of the world, did Washington cut back funds for knowledge? Did no one in the higher circles realize that every dollar "saved" by cutting these funds is lost many times over in nonproductivity and idleness? Wasn't it clear that the Administration's policies flew in the face of the long history of support for public education in the American republic?

While Reagan's cutbacks in education make no sense economically or socially, they do follow perfectly from his assumptions about knowledge, which may explain why they were proposed. Schools, for all their many faults, do teach, and teaching, as I understand that term, is antithetical to the New Right's conception of ideas. Discerning individuals are not very effective in the global battle against communism. Thoughtful men and women are not likely to make happy workers and complacent citizens. To be free, in the world according to Reagan, one must first be ignorant.

Since the Reaganites have their own notions about what people in this country should believe, the first step in bringing them along is to destroy whatever residual notions they may have picked up about the Western intellectual heritage. The best way to inculcate New Right ideas such as creationism, in short, is to destroy the institutions where competing theories are taught.

Once the ordinary American is softened up through diseducation, the next step is re-education. Toward that end, the Administration has asserted the right of the Federal government to propagate its view of the world. In slashing the budget of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, it claimed that government had no business being in the business of ideas. Yet no ideological distrust of government stopped Reagan from raising more than $550,000 for the International Communication Agency to finance a TV flop called *Let Poland Be Poland.* Government, the New Right seems to believe, has no business getting involved in the *wrong* ideas. The fact that the great communicator's taste runs to *Let Poland Be Poland* over *All Things Con-*



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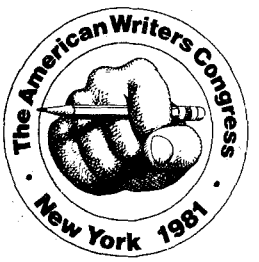
AMERICAN WRITERS CONGRESS POSTERS



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sidered is as frightful, in its own way, as his understanding of Vietnamese history.

Let Poland Be Poland did have the virtue of revealing the kind of propaganda that this Administration admires. I.C.A. director Charles Wick, a longtime Reagan friend and former arranger for Tommy Dorsey, put together a montage that combined Bob Hope and Frank Sinatra with Margaret Thatcher and Bulend Ulusu. So Tass-like was the result that most of the foreign broadcasters for whom the film was made refused to show it. Turning the struggle of the Polish workers into a Hollywood musical was embarrassing for all concerned—except Wick, who wanted to run it in the United States. The film was the best evidence since P.B.S. produced Milton Friedman's *Free To Choose* that government planning makes for a shoddy product.

In this context, Wick's decision to supplement his propaganda efforts with an advisory committee of prominent intellectuals raises some interesting questions about truth and knowledge. Wick has created a private-sector complement to the I.C.A., a New Directions Committee, whose aim is "to press the American case more effectively and with greater relevance abroad" [see William Attwood, "The Podhoretz Project," *The Nation*, March 20]. All of its members—who, not so incidentally, are certified neoconservatives—are writers or teachers, and several in the past have expressed their dismay at the left for engaging in bias and propaganda. One would expect that they might have paused before compromising their intellectual integrity through direct service to the state. Yet they seem to see no conflict between power and truth; power, to them, is truth. As educators, they can play a special role in diseducation, one they evidently relish. This has its advantages: diseducation is as rewarded in the Reagan years as education is neglected.

Once stripped of their heritage through cutbacks in funding for education and re-educated to the realities of global communism through propaganda, Americans should be ready to play their roles in the drama of right-wing apocalypse. But there is always the possibility that a dissenting thought might slip in due to carelessness. Hence the third phase in the Reaganite approach to knowledge, insuring that the only ideas around are the Administration's own.

This Administration seems firmly convinced of the public's right not to know. There is nothing pluralistic in its attempts to gut the Freedom of Information Act, to shut off leaks from its own members, to establish penalties for the disclosure of information about intelligence agents.

As every historian or journalist knows, the Freedom of Information Act has played a major role in educating the American public about the affairs of its government. What makes the campaign against it so revealing is the simplicity of the choice: one is for either enlightened knowledge or bureaucratic secrecy. In the absence of any convincing claims that the F.O.I.A. has undermined the national security of the United States, the only defense of gutting it is the protection of bureaucratic turf. That may seem peculiar to those who believe Reagan's antigovernment rhetoric; in

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reality, this Administration does distrust bureaucracy, but it distrusts an open society far more.

Similarly, the President's campaign against leaks reveals a rather vicious distrust of the marketplace, in this case the marketplace of ideas. William Clark's first act after taking over as national security adviser was to force several members of the Administration to take lie-detector tests to see if they had been telling stories to the press. (One would have expected that the image of high-level officials hooked up to polygraphs would have upset the press more than it did. When Reagan was asked about it at his January news conference, he responded—embellishing the truth, as is his custom—that leaking classified information is against the law and that his only interest lies in enforcing the law. A follow-up question to expose the emptiness of the President's response should have pointed out that all Administrations, including this one, leak the information they want to leak. That point was not made, however, and the Administration was left unscathed.)

The debate over the bill to make the disclosure of the names of intelligence operatives illegal also indicates that Reagan is far more concerned with the right not to know than he is with considerations of national security. Here Congress enthusiastically joined the diseducation campaign, turning an interest in the safety of agents abroad into a circus-like attack on journalists at home. The President and his allies in Congress were desperate to assert the principle that government has the right to interpose itself between the citizen and the knowledge the citizen needs to make informed judgments.

So long as Ronald Reagan remains President, our government will increasingly attempt to shape knowledge to reflect the interests of the state. What has happened at Wick's International Communication Agency since Reagan assumed office is instructive. Those who were reluctant to diseducate, like Frank Cummins (deputy chief of East Asian and Pacific programming), have been transferred. Academics like Fred Warner Neal, seeking I.C.A. sponsorship for overseas trips, are asked to defend the Administration's foreign policy while abroad and are rejected if they appear troublesome. The V.O.A. itself, at Wick's strong urging, has become involved in "Project Truth," which, as its name implies, is given over to the aggressive pursuit of propaganda. (At the United Nations, the V.O.A.'s bureau is located next-door to Tass. Perhaps they should merge and save office space, so blatant are the attempts of both organizations to diseducate their audiences.)

More than in any other area—more, for example, than in economics and foreign policy—the Reaganite approach to knowledge reveals the deep contempt for ordinary people that is at the heart of the Republican right's view of the world. When he proclaims tax cuts, Reagan offers something—more personal income. When he raises military spending, he offers something again—the illusion of increased national strength. But when he diseducates, Reagan takes something away. He deprives people of access to the information that makes them whole. He denies their freedom of discourse and expression. He tells people that they are ignorant and unworthy of taking ideas seriously.

One of the pleasures of Reagan-watching—admittedly, there aren't many—is observing the unraveling of right-wing ideology as it confronts the real world. A policy designed to induce growth has brought about deep recession. A firmness toward the East has split the West. Soon we will witness a similar response to the Reaganite assault on knowledge. By standing so resolutely for ignorance, Reagan gives intelligence a good reputation. His quest for diseducation will soon remind Americans—if it has not reminded them already—that ideas are too valuable to be left in the hands of those who detest them. □

WRITERS CONGRESS RECORD

Do Publishers Know About People?

"Whenever I tell agents, distributors or publishers what I think people want to read, I am told that I don't know what I am talking about, that I don't know anything about the actual marketing of books, that I don't understand "the business." Well, there's a grain of truth in that, but it's also true that these people do not know what is going on in the country; they do not know what people are thinking. . . .

"Yet the United States, surely one of the most diverse entities ever to grace the face of the earth, is still a very literate country, despite certain countervailing trends. You walk onto the subway, everybody's reading. You walk into a factory and half the people have one eye on their machine, the other on a book or magazine. I was in a gun mount in Vietnam where everyone *loaded ammunition with one hand and held a book with the other. But we are asked to believe that all people want to read are movie novelizations.*

"I have spent my life working in factories and being active in unions. I know *workers are interested in reading all kinds of literature, from poetry and plays to movie novelizations. They are very interested in world affairs. Who does Bantam Books think made* 60 Minutes *the number one TV show in America?*

"Perhaps this type of censorship is best revealed in terms of the South. The South exerts a tremendous political and economic influence on the United States and, by extension, the world. My experience has been that there is intense interest in the South. One of the easiest ways I know of to start an argument is to make any kind of flat statement about the South. But walk into a bookstore and what do you find on the subject? Books? Perhaps a few antebellum romances. Magazines? Probably nothing. Newspapers? Unless it's hurricane season, nothing. If it were not for Mardi Gras, we might be led to doubt the very existence of the South."

—Lee Ballinger, writer, steelworker,
American Writers Congress, October 9-12, 1981.

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FOLLOW-UP.

BEHIND THE VIKING CONTRACT

Insurance For Writers

RICHARD HARRIS

To set the record straight on the historic Viking Penguin breakthrough in protecting authors against one-sided and exploitive warranty clauses in publishers' contracts, which have long made writers responsible, legally and financially, for almost any kind of lawsuit against their books, I would like to add a few points to Eve Pell's article "Insuring Free Speech" [*The Nation*, March 13].

Although I was long involved in this struggle, I did not ever try, in her phrase, "to organize writers." Even the most dedicated windmill-tilter would know that is a hopeless task. Instead, I tried to organize writers' agents—a far smaller, more reachable, more responsible and more rational group. Let *them* organize their clients.

In the late 1970s, Ramsey Clark, of the law firm Clark, Wulfe & Levine, prepared a legal-fee insurance plan for writers (fees, not adverse court judgments, being the much greater cost) because of his growing concern that writers were often chilled into silence by their fears of libel or invasion-of-privacy suits. His plan, I believe, was admirable. For a very small fee, every writer could be provided up to 450 hours a year of legal representation, if enough writers participated. When the plan was completed and incorporated, I invited half a dozen leading literary agents to a meeting at Clark's offices to discuss the project. One of Clark's partners, against my strong protest, invited Irwin Karp, the lawyer for the Authors Guild. As I expected, the guild's board, with Karp's counsel, rejected the plan without giving it a fair chance. That killed it at birth.

In the spring of 1980, I mentioned the plan and its demise to a friend, Herbert Nagourney, former president of Quadrangle Books (now known as Times Books and still a subsidiary of The New York Times Company), who was well aware of the warranty-clause problem. He talked it over with a friend of his, Stuart Speiser, one of the leading negligence lawyers in the country, who also happened to have written twenty books on the law. Speiser took the problem to a friend of *his*, the head of the American International Group, one of the world's largest insurance companies, who immediately instructed his staff to look into it.

That summer, Nagourney, Speiser and I again agreed that the best approach would be through literary agents—this time without the Authors Guild. I invited the same six agents to a meeting at Speiser's office with A.I.G.'s representative Raymond Wahl. The meeting was held on October 20, 1980, and four agents attended: Perry Knowlton, Sterling Lord, Peter Shepherd and John Hawkins. Wahl informed them that his firm was prepared to offer insurance policies providing the same kind of coverage as the policies then held by publishing companies, except that the A.I.G. policies would also cover authors at no extra cost to the publisher. The offer was irresistible.

At Hawkins's suggestion, each agent agreed to go with Wahl to a selected publisher to present the new plan. The agents did as they promised (to their great credit, since this was wholly voluntary, it gave them no additional income, it meant quite a bit of extra work, and it was solely in the interests of their clients, not themselves). On November 5, Wahl and Hawkins met with Irving Goodman, president of Viking Penguin. This meeting was crucial, for Goodman was immediately interested.

Back in August, Speiser, who represented *The Times* of London in this country, had mentioned the new insurance proposal to *The Times*'s manager in New York City, Robert Ducas, who also occasionally worked as a literary agent. Ducas had sold several books to Viking, and on November 25, he suggested to Speiser that they meet with Goodman, since he seemed to be the one publisher interested in the insurance approach.

On December 2, the three men had lunch at the Four Seasons (where it sometimes seems more publishing deals than meals are prepared), and Goodman told them that he wanted to go ahead with the plan and that he wanted to be the first publisher to do so. Although it took more than a year, he was. Viking's insurance company, apparently alarmed by A.I.G.'s attempt to enter this field, matched that firm's offer in an effort to head off the competition. But A.I.G. plans to file its own insurance-coverage policy for writers in the next few weeks. In sum, the competition is there. So is the opportunity for writers and agents to demand their rights now, and I would urge them to seize it.

I'd like to add that I believe the Viking Penguin policy is wrong in one respect. It provides insurance of up to $3 million for any one book or for all books Viking Penguin publishes in the course of a year. The policy carries a $25,000 deductible, all but $1,000 of which the publisher will pay. The remainder is the author's responsibility. I think this sum is too low. There are careless writers, vindictive writers, dishonest writers, stupid writers. If their work results in too many lawsuits, the entire program will collapse. I think the writer's share should be $5,000. Since this is a couple of hundred dollars more than the average annual income of writers in this country, it should help keep them honest. It should also help create, for the first time in this country, a true partnership between writer and publisher. □

Richard Harris is the author of Freedom Spent, Enemies *and a forthcoming novel,* Honor Bound.

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BOOKS & THE ARTS.

'No End of a Lesson'

CHRISTOPHER HITCHENS

WHY WE WERE IN VIETNAM. *By Norman Podhoretz. Simon and Schuster. 240 pp. $14.50.*

From 1899 to 1902, an empire fought a war in a faraway country. It used its own troops and local allies as well. The enemy was poorly armed but resourceful and daring in guerrilla tactics. The soldiers of the empire, frustrated by their failures in the field, began to behave disgracefully toward civilians. The term "concentration camp" was coined. Despite the fact that another great and menacing empire stood behind the guerrilla cause, despite the fact that liberal opinion at home was revolted by the war and despite pleas that more men and more money would finish the job, the soldiers were withdrawn. An unusually cruel and nasty regime was formed by the guerrillas and continues to this day.

From 1954 to 1975, an empire fought a war in a faraway country. It used its own troops and a profusion of surrogate ones. The enemy was relatively poorly armed but brave and cunning in guerrilla tactics. The soldiers of the empire, frustrated by their failures in the field, began to act horrifically toward the population. Despite the fact that another great and menacing empire stood behind the guerrilla cause, despite the outrage of opinion worldwide and despite pleas that the job could be finished with fresh efforts and better surrogates, the soldiers were withdrawn. A bleak and repressive regime was set up in the ruins of the country.

Of the war waged by Britain against the Dutch settlers of South Africa, no less an "imperialist" than Rudyard Kipling had this to say:

> Let us admit it fairly, as a business people should—
> We have had no end of a lesson:
> It will do us no end of good.

Of the war waged by the United States against North Vietnam and the Vietcong, Norman Podhoretz has this to say:

> An act of imprudent idealism whose moral soundness has been so overwhelmingly vindicated by the hideous consequences of our defeat.

More than a difference of style separates the two verdicts. Kipling felt that Britain, as a country which had adopted vast global responsibilities, should avoid hubris and the temptations of omnipotence. Even though German imperialism backed the Boers, a sense of proportion should be maintained. Podhoretz's world view is, by contrast, so neurotic and unstable that he regards any challenge of any kind, from any quarter, as a personal threat. He has no confidence and no sense of history—only a weird sense of his own urgency and importance. That confusion has warped many better men.

Still—why not begin by paying him a compliment? A compliment, by the way, that he seems unable (as well as unwilling) to return. Why not present his own argument at its strongest? The task is a simple one, and depends upon a few loosely related propositions.

> (*1*) The United States involved itself in Vietnam for motives that, while confused, were decent and realistic.
>
> (*2*) The war was conducted far more humanely than many people have been led to suppose.
>
> (*3*) The defeat was in many important respects self-inflicted and avoidable—i.e., the war could have been won in some meaningful sense of the word.
>
> (*4*) The subsequent fates of Vietnam and Cambodia validate the initial reason for the war. Totalitarianism is on the march, and will have to be fought sooner or later. The boat people and the Khmer Rouge are passive and active testimony to that unwelcome fact.

This case is not unfamiliar. It falls, like most of Podhoretz's current positions, just on the respectable side of banal Reaganism. He does not actually say, as the President did recently, that Vietnam was "a noble cause." But he certainly doesn't offend anybody who might think the President was right in that description of the affair.

Alas, poor Norman. He still feels compelled to argue the point and to try to document it. He hasn't noticed that the true believer is not bothered with such niceties. So he comes apart, badly, in every chapter.

His early history is rotten, of course. In his effort to show the high motives of American policy in the 1950s, Podhoretz flounders through a series of non sequiturs. The United States, it seems, could not intervene on the side of the French because they were "colonialists." Only the rout of France at Dien Bien Phu offered a new beginning. So why did the Americans pay France's war bills before Dien Bien Phu? Why did Col. Edward Lansdale find himself in dubious battle so early? Why did Washington ignore overtures from Ho Chi Minh? Silence from Norman.

His later history is lousy. He rehearses the atrocity argument in order to exculpate U.S. commanders. But he doesn't mention the Phoenix program or Agent Orange. He nods impatiently at the evidence of defoliation, free-fire zones and simple massacre. My Lai, of course, is an admitted "exception," though Podhoretz shows nothing but hatred and contempt for the journalists who uncovered and reported what he here grudgingly acknowledges. Racial hatred of the Vietnamese, torture and all the other colonial trimmings are simply ignored. And when he admits malpractice at all, Podhoretz manages to make it sound humanitarian:

> No wonder, then, that the rules of engagement were often violated in practice by commanders in the field who—in a tradition that was in the past held to be a special moral glory of the American military—were determined to do everything in their power to protect the men for whose lives they were responsible.

As opposed, presumably, to those for whose lives they were not. You might say that this was Podhoretz destroying his own argument in order to save it.

His historical method is tenth-rate. He concedes what is obvious: that during and after Tet in 1968, the physical base of the National Liberation Front was very nearly exterminated. He later complains that in postwar Saigon the vaunted Vietcong were hardly represented among the new cadres. He seems unable to connect the two observations—for a reason that becomes obvious. For his whole purpose in the book is not to rewrite the history of the Vietnam intervention. That is a mere subplot, and very imperfectly realized. It is to begin a vendetta against "the enemy within" and thus to justify

Christopher Hitchens is a contributing editor of The Nation.

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future interventions in advance. The passages of real interest are those toward the end where he starts tossing and goring the antiwar intellectuals. Here, at least, he knows his way around a bit.

Susan Sontag is attacked for her gullibility on a visit to Hanoi—this is old stuff and Sontag has since, as they say, come to terms with her past. Various other bits of foolishness are quoted. One reads them with the same shrug as one read them at the time. When off-guard remarks about the nature of the war are being recalled, I find it is the one about bombing the Vietnamese back into the Stone Age that lodges in the memory. Podhoretz doesn't have room for this kind of recollection. Nor, which is odd in a book about Vietnam and the United States, does he ever review the effect of the war on social programs, on race relations, on political and civil liberties, on government cheating and state secrecy. Instead, he discovers the main culprits to have been William Shawcross and Stanley Hoffmann.

I promise that I am not caricaturing his conclusions. Shawcross is attacked, with spite and spittle, for daring to argue that the aerial destruction of Cambodia made the Khmer Rouge more brutal and more likely to win. In other words, Podhoretz contends that Cambodia would be just as badly off today if the United States had not intervened at all. That is what I mean by his having no sense of history. (I pass over the fact that Reagan and *Commentary* are both Khmer Rouge supporters these days, again on the old basis that anything is better than the Soviet Union.)

At the head of the book stands a quotation from Bismarck: "Woe to the statesman whose reasons for entering a war do not appear so plausible at its end as at its beginning." This is a sonorous platitude signifying nothing. Nobody is as trite and tautological as Bismarck, unless perhaps it is Clausewitz. And beware always of those who quote them. But it does connect happily with Podhoretz's claim that there has been no "stab in the back" syndrome, no wild accusation about "who lost Vietnam?" Insofar as that is true (which is about half—not bad for Podhoretz), he clearly wishes that it were not. The intention of this little pamphlet is quite manifestly to begin such an inquisition. It's fortunate, then, that the result is so dingy, sloppy and unconvincing. □

Sunshine Fantasies

PETER SCHRAG

CALIFORNIA, INC. *By Joel Kotkin and Paul Grabowicz. Rawson, Wade Publishers. 312 pp. $13.95.*

Twenty years ago, when California passed New York as the country's most populous state, Eastern journalists began an orgy of California rediscovery so steeped in futuristic hyperbole that it sounded quaint even then. They all did California—*Time*, *Life*, *Newsweek*, *Look*, *Ladies' Home Journal*, the networks—and they all did it pretty much the same way: blondes around the swimming pool; Nobel laureates at Berkeley and Cal Tech; cults and sects and crazy organizations; hippies in the Haight; pictures of the Golden Gate Bridge at sunset; and no end of deep speculation about the future. "California," wrote George B. Leonard in a typical piece in 1962, "presents the promise and challenge contained at the very heart of the American dream; here, probably more than at any other place or time, the shackles of the past are broken. In helping to create the society of the future, a man is limited only by the strength of his ambition, the dimension of his concern and the depth of his courage to face the dangers of his own creation."

It shouldn't be surprising that after 2,000 years of fantasies about Atlantis and El Dorado and the Seven Golden Cities, the California myth should die hard—and it therefore shouldn't be surprising that journalists like Joel Kotkin and Paul Grabowicz are still pushing it. They have tried to offer it up in a self-consciously new form, focusing on economic clout rather than on sunshine fantasies, but in the end *California, Inc.* isn't all that different from *Time* and *Life* and George Leonard in 1962.

The book's thesis is simple and, to people who've read Kirkpatrick Sale's *Power Shift* (Random House, 1975), all too familiar. To quote the jacket, (which says it more succinctly than the authors): "A massive shift of economic, political and cultural power from East to West has been quietly effected by a new elite class in California, men and women who care little about the problems that plague the older cities and industries of America. Under their leadership, California is transforming American society and writing the scenario for the country's future."

At the core of the shift are the decline of the country's older industries—steel, automobiles—and the regions in which they're located, and the rise of the high-tech and extraction industries in the West and Southwest. Kotkin and Grabowicz present a redundancy of statistics to demonstrate that the West is prospering while the East is becoming (or has already become) a backwater beyond economic redemption. They acknowledge that there are some clouds in this blue Western sky—growing race and immigration problems, for example, and the gradual depletion of the soil and water that sustain California's enormously successful agribusiness industry—but those clouds hardly deter our authors from their general elaboration of California's limitless possibilities as what they call "the free enterprise society."

Kotkin and Grabowicz describe the shift as the change from high cult (New York City) to mass cult (Los Angeles); the replacement of the Eastern Republican establishment with a freewheeling Western Republicanism; the change from the European orientation of the Eastern seaboard to the Asian orientation of what is repeatedly referred to as the "Pacific Rim." (Like the California myth, manifest destiny also dies hard.) To support their arguments, Kotkin and Grabowicz have put Ronald Reagan and Jerry Brown, his successor as California's governor, into more or less the same boat—both are characterized as enemies of the welfare state and as friends and boosters of California's new entrepreneurs in electronics, mass communications, energy and aerospace.

At the core of the shift is a mixture of the most exploitative in the old cowboy culture, the worst of the new narcissism and what can only be described as an awesome cultural shallowness. "We've had enough of 'what's mine is mine and what's yours is mine,'" they quote one executive as saying. "That's been going on in this country for the last fifty years. We should get back to 'what's mine is mine and what's yours is yours and if you step over the line, I'll blow

Peter Schrag is editorial page editor of the Sacramento Bee *and author of, among other books,* Mind Control *(Pantheon).*

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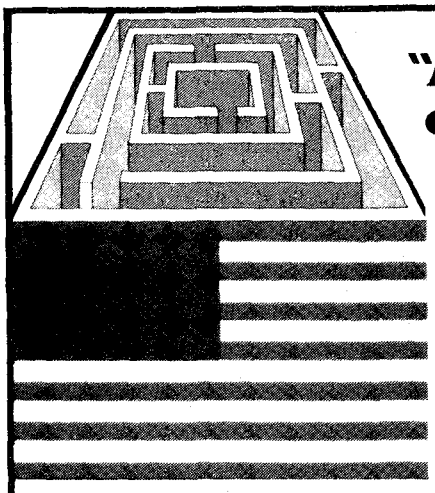
your brains out.' That's the Western way."

There's considerable truth in such characterizations, just as there's truth in the authors' characterization of what might be called the Hollywoodization of American politics. "As the public's interest in political parties and issues is displaced by the *People* magazine imagery of Hollywood politics," they write, "the very meaning of the elective and legislative process has changed dramatically. . . . Regional identification, class, community, all fade before the chimera of media politics. The individual's involvement in the political process is thereby reduced, leaving a mass who cast their votes according to which celebrity candidate titillates their private fantasies." That, of course, isn't unique to California, but it's mostly created in California according to California idioms and is far more pronounced now in California politics than anywhere else. One wishes they'd said more about that.

And yet, finally, the thesis of *California, Inc.* is too simple and ignores too much. It ignores the state's—and Brown's—leadership in the conservation of energy and resources; its pioneering efforts in pesticide regulation, worker safety and environmental protection; and its near-total freeze on new nuclear power development, none of which are dear to the hearts of the state's freewheeling entrepreneurs. It ignores the fact that California maintains far higher levels of welfare payments, even after Proposition 13, than any state of comparable size. It ignores the fact that California has the only effective farm labor law in the country. It ignores the immense differences within the state, including differences over economic and cultural values. It ignores the importance of agribusiness to the state's economy and thus underestimates California's dependence on large Federal irrigation projects. Most of all, it ignores what California, particularly the Central Valley and Southern California, has in common with the rest of the West and Southwest. In their eagerness to make their California case, Kotkin and Grabowicz write as if Houston, Dallas and Denver simply don't exist—as if the rest of the region were nothing but a fief of San Francisco and Los Angeles. Along the way, former Texas Governor John Connally (whose name they misspell) is, incredibly, lumped with John Anderson as a candidate of the Eastern establishment.



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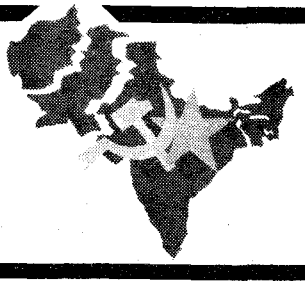

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The power shift from Northeast to Southwest has proceeded apace since people like Carl Oglesby started talking about the struggles between the "Yankees" and the "Cowboys" more than a decade ago. That's clear enough even without comparative statistics about corporate profits and regional unemployment. And yet it would be dangerous to make too much of the meaning of that shift or to quote too confidently, as *California, Inc.* does again and again, the brash laissez-faire assertions of the newly self-made men of the West—the people who say, "Leave us alone and let the declining East go to hell."

Just before *California, Inc.* was published, Jerry Brown began to cite data indicating that the Japanese had captured the market for the new generation of electronic chips, the basic product of California's highly successful and, until now, apparently invulnerable electronics industry. That, he suggested, was because Japan was providing a more hospitable environment for industrial and technological development than the United States. As a candidate for the U.S. Senate, he said, he would not advocate protectionism, but he would be willing to threaten the Japanese with it to make them lower their restrictions on importing American products.

Obviously the people in the auto and textile industries will watch with keen interest. Maybe things won't get bad enough in California to make its Silicon Valley (as Brown recently put it) the Detroit of tomorrow, but when the facts won't hold up even until the day the book comes out, it's time to abandon the myth. □

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Speaking Memory

HAROLD JAFFE

FIGHT BACK: For the Sake of the People, For the Sake of the Land. *By Simon J. Ortiz. The Institute for Native American Development. 75 pp. $6.95.*

FROM SAND CREEK. *By Simon J. Ortiz. Thunder's Mouth Press. 95 pp. $4.95.*

Although he has been publishing fine poetry since the mid-1960s, Simon Ortiz, an Acoma Pueblo born in 1941, was until recently read mainly by other American Indian writers and by a handful of small-press addicts. Ortiz's audience widened somewhat after Harper and Row published *Going for the Rain* in 1976. Here is a representative exchange from that volume:

> Q. "What would you say that the main theme of your poetry is?"
> A. ". . . to recognize the relationships I share with everything."

American Indians have always known a good deal about relationships, communion; more than others, their relationships have been forcibly severed. Ortiz's fundamental theme concerns these sacred relationships—and their violations. Although his poems are usually about American Indians, the audience addressed in his work includes the poor, the dispossessed *and* the untranquilized middle class of various hues.

Both new volumes of poetry are testimonials: *Fight Back* to the revolt of the Pueblos (along with mestizos, mulattoes, Navahos and Apaches) against the Spanish colonialists in 1680; *From Sand Creek* marks the 1864 massacre of 133 Arapahoes and Cheyennes, nearly all women and children, in southeastern Colorado.

From Sand Creek is the more cohesive volume of the two. It contains forty-two poems on consecutive recto pages, with the same number of brief prose passages on the facing versos. The prose often introduces a theme or an image that is taken up in the corresponding poem or elsewhere in the volume. Most of the poems contain details about a Veterans Administration hospital in Fort Lyons, Colorado, where their narrator is a patient in 1974 and 1975.

What does the V.A. hospital have to do with Sand Creek? A good deal, really. According to Ortiz's accompanying note, the Cheyennes and Arapahoes who were camped on a bend of Sand Creek thought they were at peace with the whites. President Lincoln himself had presented Black Kettle, one of the guiding elders, with an American flag, which, the Indians were told, would protect them from attack. The flag was flying above Black Kettle's lodge on that cold November dawn when Colonel Chivington and more than 700 volunteers and troops from nearby Fort Lyons swooped down on the 600 Indians and wiped them out.

One-hundred-odd years later, the patients in the V.A. hospital in Fort Lyons include many young American Indians who, like their forebears, wished in some measure to trust the flag, and who fought for it in Vietnam. Those who returned, returned emptied of their trust in the U.S. government and, too often, of their ability to endure as aliens on their own soil.

The words and images with which Ortiz repeatedly characterizes the hospitalized Indians are *blood*, *dream*, *breath*, *shadow*, *compassion*, *memory*, *love*, *ghost*. Combined, these words have the impact of a mountain or tree rooted in the natural cycle, which, when unimpeded, is perpetual. Only there is impediment everywhere in Ortiz's poems, and his people are reduced to shadows striving, usually fruitlessly, to reconnect with their bodies, their earth, their birthright:

> Looking for Billy . . .
> He was the shadow.
> Memory was his lost trail.

Almost seamlessly, Ortiz imbues his

Harold Jaffe's collection of short stories Mourning Crazy Horse *(Fiction Collective) has just been published.*

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sad, spare hospital scenes not only with the dreadful echo of the Sand Creek massacre but with a selective history of Native American faith, oppression and resistance. Yet the cumulative impression is, admirably, not of gloom and despair but of a renewed faith in the prospect of relationship with the land and solidarity among the dispossessed.

The single non-Indian literary precedent for these poems who comes to mind is Whitman during the Civil War, especially in his "Wound Dresser" letters from the veterans hospitals in Washington, D.C. Ortiz is himself a wound dresser, but unlike Whitman, whose rhapsodic brotherhood was often celebrated without identifiable basis, Ortiz's final affirmative, mined as it is from the grieving poems, glows with the luster of someone who has come through.

Ortiz owes much to the great body of invocation, song and prayer that is central to the Native American oral tradition. Aside from a modest number of books, such as Paul Radin's *The Autobiography of a Winnebago Indian* (1920) and Ruth Underhill's *Singing for Power* (1938), this "literature" has been largely unrecorded until recently. But contemporary American Indians have begun to draw on this tradition and to create an impressive canon of imaginative prose and poetry. Because the strongest of these writers (Ortiz, N. Scott Momaday, Vine Deloria, Leslie Marmon Silko, James Welch, Luther Standing Bear and others) have succeeded in fusing fractured present to coherent past, their writings are frequently more problematic than those of their forebears. In Ortiz, for example, the apparently simple, yet elusive, syntax sometimes seems fractionally off, as if the English were adapted from another language.

> They should have eaten
> whole buffalo.
> They should have,
> like the people wanted for them.

Fight Back seems a simpler volume than it is. Except for the 27-page "No More Sacrifices," the poems are usually brief narratives about the Pueblos and Navahos and whites who live in the "Uranium Belt" west of Albuquerque, New Mexico. Ortiz shows us these people working in the uranium mines or the mills, riding in car pools, planting in a clayey soil, bathing in the sacred hot springs. We observe their distress, their joys and the persistent faith in the

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natural order that sustains them.

"No More Sacrifices" is the linchpin of the volume and one of the strongest poems in recent memory. Strictly speaking it is more prose then verse, part meditation, part sociopolitical analysis. The poet has climbed a volcanic mountain called Srhakaiya, west of the village that the white people named McCartys in which he was raised. Descending the mountain and walking home,

> I was sick
> feeling a sense of "otherness."
> How can I describe it?
> An electric current
> coursing in waves through me?
> "Otherness."

It becomes clear that his disconnection was produced by his vision on the mountain. Not so much what he physically saw (though pollution and industrialization were visible) as what he saw through to: the history of the Acoma people from the days before the Spanish conquest to the Pueblo revolt. He saw the invasion of the "Mericanos" with their railroads and cavalry and uranium mines. And he saw the people's painful transition from productive land-laborers to wage slaves.

His vision sickens the poet, but then, while resting under a juniper on his walk home, the "otherness" recedes, and he sees something else:

> . . . horses.
> One was a pinto
> and the other was red.
> The sun had long set.
> The horses were alert
> to me as I passed by.
> Suddenly, they bolted,
> and galloped
> into the canyon . . .

The sight of the horses enforces his relationship with the land, even as it underscores his realization of what must be done for the future he envisions:

> The future will not be mad with loss
> and waste though
> the memory will be there; eyes will
> become kind
> and deep, and the bones of this nation
> will mend. . . . □

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LINGO.

JIM QUINN

Edwin Newman has been at it again—defending the English language from the people who use it. But, possibly because there is a new spirit of idiomatic freedom and independence abroad in the land, all he got for his trouble was a laugh. The December 1981 issue of *Commentary* carries a Newman letter attacking a Joseph Epstein article on the pleasures of reading:

> The usual mistakes in English creep in. Mr. Epstein writes of "those fornicators and feeders who wish each in their own fashion to devour the world." *Each* requires the singular. *Their* means that the fornicators and feeders all have the same fashion, which is not—so far as Mr. Epstein's prose style permits one to be sure—what he intended.

Epstein's answer begins: "Dear Ed: Although we have never met, I take the liberty of addressing you as Ed because I feel we are getting to know each other. Over the past few months, you have written three letters to *Commentary* about me. I feel, Ed, that we are becoming pen pals. How are things with your family? Well, I hope . . ." and continues in the same manner.

Insouciance, a rarely practiced virtue, is, like all the rest of them, its own reward. But Epstein's good humor has led him to neglect an even better answer: Newman is wrong. In standard literary English *each* does not "require" the singular. That rule is one of the most widespread, and indefensible, of all the superstitions promoted by our pop grammarians. Like *anyone, everyone, whoever* and the other indefinite pronouns, *each* has always been used with plurals. That use has been noted, and defended, in scholarly grammars (Otto Jespersen's *Modern English Grammar*), in many style books (Bergen Evans's *Dictionary of Contemporary English Usage*) and in leading dictionaries (The Oxford English and Webster's Third). James Thurber, in a short story called "The Interview," has a great and grumpy writer tell a reporter, "Everybody replies to my questions the way they think I want them to reply. You can say that I say, 'Everybody-they'; I hate 'everybody-he.' 'Has everybody brought his or her slate?' a teacher of mine, a great goat of a woman, used to ask us. There is no tongue in the world as clumsy as ours is—with its back to certain corners."

It's easy to back English into those corners. Imagine how funny it would sound if we really said or wrote these kinds of things:

> Everybody has gone home—and it's about time he did.
>
> Each partner in marriage should try his best.
>
> An accident?—nobody was hurt, was he? Nobody asked your opinion, did he?
>
> Neither John nor Mary were very comfortable in his new bathing suit. Neither John nor Mary could make up his or her mind.

Of course, there is a standard pop grammar reply to being backed into those corners: recast the whole sentence. This is an interesting reply. It seems to mean that, while those sentences are perfectly intelligible and perfectly idiomatic if a plural is used, the purpose of correct grammar is to stop us from using it. But, as the Oxford English Dictionary says, "The pronoun referring to everyone is often plural, the absence of a singular pronoun of common gender rendering this violation of grammatical concord sometimes necessary." And even the most resolute pop grammarian would think twice before recasting this famous exchange, from Oscar Wilde's *Lady Windermere's Fan*:

> GRAHAM: Experience is a question of instinct about life. I have got it. Tuppy hasn't. Experience is the name Tuppy gives to his mistakes.
> DUMBY: Experience is the name everyone gives to their mistakes.

(Though in *The People's Almanac #2* you can find, in a section called "The Wit and Wisdom of Oscar Wilde," edited by Irving Wallace, "Experience is the name everyone gives to his mistakes.")

The O.E.D. and Jespersen cite plurals with indefinites in *Cursor Mundi* (fourteenth century); Chaucer; Caxton; Thomas More; Malory; Shakespeare ("God send everyone their heart's desire," *Much Ado About Nothing*); the King James Bible (Matthew 18:35, "if ye forgive not every one his brother their trespasses"); Fielding; Swift; Congreve; Samuel Johnson; Lord Chesterton ("If a person is born of a gloomy temper . . . they cannot help it"); Richardson; Defoe; Jane Austen ("innumerable times," says Jesperson); Scott; Dickens; George Eliot ("A week

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was surely enough for anyone to go out for their health"); Byron; Stevenson; Ruskin; Kipling; Shaw . . . and others.

In *Modern English in the Making* (1928), George McKnight made fun of the American worry about singulars after indefinites, and especially of Richard Grant White (a kind of Edwin Newman of his day), who had complained that the educated English frequently used plurals:

> The kinds of "misuse" here condemned in American use, in British use are established not only by long tradition but by current practice. The awkward necessity so often met with in American speech of using the double pronoun "his or her" is obviated by the "misuse" of *their*.

Bergen Evans cites the Constitution itself, Article 1, Section 5, Subsection 3: "Each house shall keep a journal . . . [and] publish the same, excepting such parts as may in their judgment require secrecy."

And, says Evans, "this is not bad grammar which must be smilingly excused because of the ignorance of the Founding Fathers. It is good English."

That is to say, despite Edwin Newman, there are no absolute requirements in language. Writing good English requires an ear for idiom, and writing good literary English requires a familiarity with all those writers cited by Jespersen and Evans and Webster's and the O.E.D. Just the kind of familiarity Newman might achieve if he would only spend a little more time reading and less complaining about violations of his fictitious rules.

But there are those who, once given a rule, will not and cannot go against it—like those pitiable guys in crowded elevators struggling to get their hats off or treading on everybody's toes to make sure that the women get off first.

In fact, McKnight thought that Americans were doomed to that kind of clumsy correctness:

> It must be borne in mind how few Americans, even Americans prominent in public life, in earlier generations were reared in centers of culture or in circles where a cultivated manner of speech was prevalent. American cultivation in language, consequently, has in the past taken the direction of a correctness gained from schools or from literary models. . . . From the substitution of abstract principle in place of concrete example there results frequently a loss in the naturalness and ease of manner that belongs to purely idiomatic expression.

There's more than a little insular snobbery in that assessment—and possibly some truth. At least this is true: in Sterling Leonard's famous survey of attitudes to correctness (*Current English Usage*, 1932), linguists rated *everyone/they* as correct—editors rated it as incorrect. In Norman Lewis's much smaller survey (*Harper's*, March 1949, "How Correct Must English Be?"), only professors of English voted the construction correct. And in 1970, when Oxford University Press published *Attitudes to English Usage*, 72 percent of the people surveyed said the construction was acceptable in informal speech and writing; only 19 percent said it was acceptable in formal use. And the least tolerant group was the examiners of English.

Maybe all this proves is that many of the new professionals in both England and America have come from working-class or lower-middle-class backgrounds—and are easily convinced that they have not grown up "in circles where a cultivated manner of speech was prevalent." So of course anything that sounds odd or awkward . . . must be right.

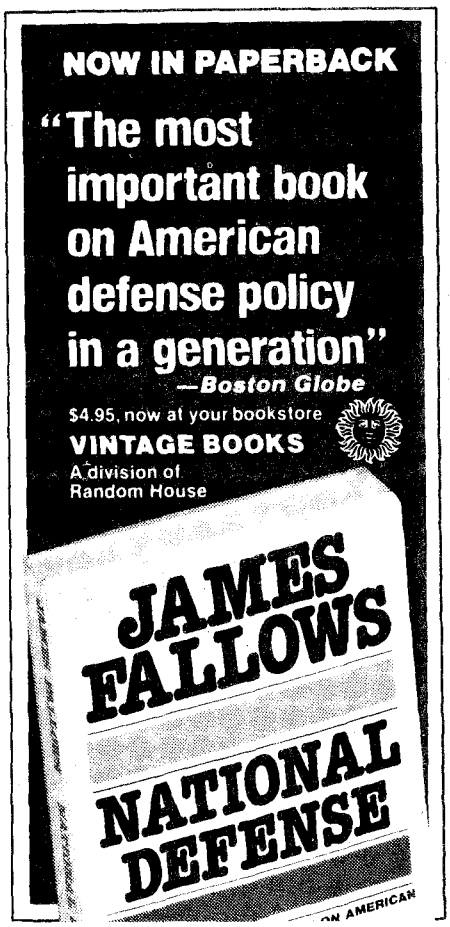
So we all, literally, read Newman and Safire and Simon and company the way our parents (if they were anxious and ambitious enough) read Emily Post. And we crowd into the elevator of language, sweating, red-faced, constrained, crushed fedoras and crunched toes at the ready, sacrificing every sensible idea of human behavior to the etiquette of upward mobility. In a way, that would have given even poor, bumbling, dull-normal—but unaffected—old Tuppy the laugh on us. □

THEATER.

RICHARD GILMAN

Lydie Breeze
The Unseen Hand

In comparison with most European cultures, America has a thin tradition of playwriting; a native drama did not come into its own here until nearly the end of the last century. One result of this is that we tend to overvalue the work of those American playwrights who do have talent: we create instant masters. O'Neill's inflated reputation is the chief example. More recently, Arthur Miller and Edward Albee have suffered from the same early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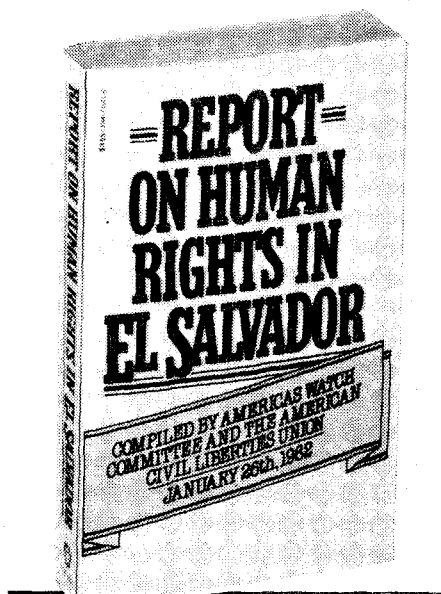
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critical overestimation; the harm in Miller's case showed itself in his paralysis in the face of what was expected of him, and in Albee's, in his repeated and doomed attempts to live up to his reputation as an innovator.

Drama critics, detesting a vacuum, find writers to praise and elevate into mastery (literary critics are somewhat more restrained). I was put in mind of this situation when I saw John Guare's new play and read the notices of my fellow reviewers. Nobody is quite saying that Guare is the new Strindberg or Beckett or even O'Neill (although Jack Kroll, *Newsweek*'s indefatigable ravebestower, comes close), but with a few honorable exceptions the play has been applauded astoundingly beyond its merits. As far as I could see, *Lydie Breeze* has no merits. What it does have is an elaborate fraudulence: false lyricism, false philosophy, borrowed plot elements and characters, an impression of depth with no substance at all. In short, the play is just the sort of thing that perpetually takes in critics avid for eulogizing.

Guare's play is set in a decaying house on the beach at Nantucket in 1895. The title character has been dead for some years, a suicide following her husband's murder of her lover, but her presence is felt—or is supposed to be felt—everywhere. The husband now lives in this house under a curse (the first of many literary scavengings, this one from O'Neill, if not from the Greeks or from the Greeks via O'Neill) with his teen-age daughter, who is or isn't half-blind, and a maid-tutor, who is or isn't Irish. They are visited by an older daughter who works in Washington for a senator, and by several young and older men who have various functions in the creation of plot and atmosphere.

The atmosphere is New England Gothic, for the most part, although it spills over into Norwegian Gothic, which brings us to the question of plot. Apart from O'Neill, the writer whom Guare has rummaged in most busily is Ibsen, plucking themes, incidents and even phrases of dialogue from *Ghosts* and *The Lady From the Sea*, although *Rosmersholm*, *Little Eyolf* and *John Gabriel Borkman* make substantial contributions too. I won't attempt to summarize the narrative use Guare has made of these appropriations and of his own singularly flaccid inventions, except to say simply that *Lydie Breeze* is a lurid tale—something having to do with revenge, fatal love, hauntings, a case of syphilis and political matters concerning William Randolph Hearst.

Ludicrous plots are likely to result in ludicrous dialogue, and that's certainly the case here. A small anthology of lines delivered with orotund solemnity: "The only power is the power that comes from being around power"; "We are what we are for only a few moments in our lives"; "Ghosts will follow you anywhere"; and, my favorite, "America could have been great but we never trusted our dream." While I'm on the subject of language, I might mention the bemusement with which I heard these 1895 characters saying "frig off," "sucker" and "wise up," among other anachronisms.

Louis Malle, the film maker, has directed the play in a frenetic fashion, perhaps thinking he was doing another *motion* picture. I admired only the shrewd, supple performance of Josef Sommer as the widower-father-murderer, and was especially disappointed by Ben Cross, who did such lovely work in the movie *Chariots of Fire*; here, in the role of the murdered man's son come back for vengeance, Cross only strikes poses with his etched profile. Malle was the director of *Atlantic City*, for which Guare won an award for best screenplay. I didn't think much of that film: spurious originality, borrowings, a thin air of being with it. Upon rereading most of Guare's plays after seeing this one, I think that description holds up for his entire *oeuvre*.

There's a nice revival going on of a play by a writer who does deserve our esteem and plaudits—or did, since his recent work has shown a loss of imaginative vigor. Sam Shepard's *The Unseen Hand* isn't one of his richest or most accomplished pieces, but it's wholly characteristic of his late-early or early-middle period, and it offers a good deal of high-spiritedness and verbal fun. Shepard's dominant themes and iconography are on display: uprootedness, science fiction as contemporary mythology, our culture of cars and violence. A cast of five does well by the deliciously named characters—Sycamore, Blue, Willy the Space Freak, etc.—and the set and direction, by Dorian Vernacchio and Tony Barsha, respectively, have the proper qualities of raunchiness, camp and mad excess. □

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FILMS.

ROBERT HATCH

Mephisto
The Meadow
La Vie Continue
The Atomic Cafe

Occasionally on the stage, perhaps less often on the screen, a play rides on the shoulders of a single performer. I don't mean that the director or the rest of the cast are inconsequential; at the very least, they are essential to the realization of the dominant role. Nor am I thinking of such evident star vehicles as *The Elephant Man* or *Stevie*. What I have in mind are full-bodied dramatic works that nevertheless we remember in terms of how so and so played his or her part. *Hamlet* is the obvious stage example; on the screen, Bertolt Hoffmann held this key position in *Knife in the Head*, and now Klaus Maria Brandauer has it in *Mephisto*.

The picture was made by the Hungarian director Istvan Szabo from Klaus Mann's novel by the same name. It begins as Hitler is emerging in Germany and ends before the outbreak of World War II. Mann wrote the book in 1936. It was banned by the Nazis and was refused publication in 1948 (Mann killed himself two weeks after that rejection) and again in 1963, the objection on those occasions being that the central character, Hendrik Höfgen, was readily identifiable as Gustav Gründgens—an actor who had prospered during the Hitler years, was jailed briefly after the war and then was released to resume his career.

This background places *Mephisto* in historical context, but is not of crucial importance. Neither, in fact, is the vulgar ostentation and remorseless cruelty of Germany's upstart masters, though that aspect of the film, richly recorded, may touch the nerves of Eastern European audiences. What gripped me was Brandauer's impersonation of a man who is on the one hand a superb actor and on the other nothing but an actor.

One tends to assume that celebrated actors have impressive faces, but can you recall the features of Laurence Olivier, of Ralph Richardson? When I try, I see again one or another of the characters they played. Brandauer has

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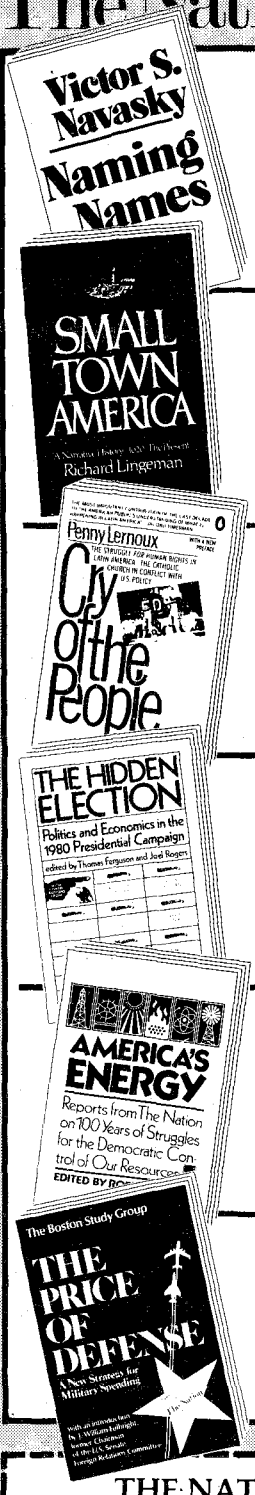
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such a face. It is easy enough to remember how he looked as Mephistopheles or as a Prussian hussar, but his appearance as Höfgen comes back to me as a flickering montage. A snapshot of the man would, I suspect, be almost anonymous. It is how Höfgen/Brandauer uses his face that produces the vivid impression, and that depends on the occasion. Every gifted actor or actress evokes the physical presence of the character he or she has assumed, but what are we to make of a character who adopts a different presence every time he walks through a door? As played by Brandauer, Höfgen is a one-man show—freedom fighter, athletic lover, devoted husband, incomparable actor, impassioned director, faithful friend, masterful executive, circumspect toady. His face is an opportunistic kaleidoscope, his body a glossary of human gestures. How can he change masks and forms so quickly and with such nice adjustment to circumstances? It is mercurial—that is, disturbing.

And then it is borne in on us that Höfgen excels at the plasticity that is an actor's greatest physical asset because he lacks abiding substance. Like some disembodied spirit, he can make himself visible only by inhabiting a borrowed guise. For him, acting is not merely a demanding art; it is literally his body, and he has no soul. He puts success ahead of all other moral and emotional considerations because he has no choice, and he acts in every human relationship because acting is all he has to offer. Brandauer's achievement is to make tangible and credible a being whose essential quality is that he has none; it is astonishing and frightening.

In short order, Höfgen rises from a little-known Hamburg repertory actor of leftist sympathies to become the presiding star of the Berlin State Theater and a favorite of the Nazi hierarchy because he can reshape Mephistopheles to Hitler's purposes and present Hamlet as the prototype of Aryan manhood. He divorces his wife, who has fled to Paris, and sloughs off his mistress, who is intelligent, alluring, but black. He becomes the special protégé of a general (Rolf Hoppe), who vividly reminds one of Hermann Goering. Unfortunately for Höfgen, the general is also an actor—he plays the stern but jolly, not to say indulgent, Junker father, but there is nothing amorphous about the inner man. He is a killer with a sense of the macabre, and Höfgen is last seen impaled by converging searchlights and crying, "What do they want of me? I'm only an actor."

Mephisto is a film that bites hard and is relevant far beyond its time and place. As he showed earlier in *Confidence*, Szabo has a subtle and disconcertingly clear understanding of personality; his present diagnosis of the malformation caused by the absence of personality creates a movie that will not be easily forgotten.

The Meadow (*Il Prato*) was written and directed by the brothers Paolo and Vittorio Taviani, whose *Padre Padrone* was the strange, haunting story, said to be based on fact, of a Sicilian shepherd who broke out of his life of solitary ignorance to become a linguistic scholar. Their new movie tells of a young Milanese magistrate who, sent to Tuscany to dispose of his family's farm, falls precipitately in love with a woman who walks on stilts and engages children in amateur theatricals. She responds vigorously to his ardor, but without telling him that she is the mistress of another splendid chap. The men find that they get along famously, and this creates an emotional impasse which the hero resolves by committing suicide in a most unusual way: he refrains from having himself treated for the bite of a rabid dog and expires in a helicopter that, belatedly, is rushing him to the hospital. The film also contains a good deal about the ambiguity of father-son relationships, and a full-dress rendition of *The Pied Piper of Hamelin*, with the heroine in the title role. It is a picture that manages to be implausible without being particularly inventive, and could have succeeded only with acting of considerable subtlety. As it happens, Saverio Marconi, who plays the lead, has a gift for looking stunned. This infects his colleagues, Isabella Rossellini (daughter of Roberto Rossellini and Ingrid Bergman) and Michele Placido, with the result that the picture moves somewhat fitfully. It was shot for the most part in and around San Gimignano, a Tuscan hill town whose towers stand like ancestral totems above the rich countryside.

Annie Girardot, Jean-Pierre Cassel and Pierre Dux star in Moshe Mizrahi's *La Vie Continue*, and it turns out that their formidable screen personalities rather overpower the fragile plot. Jeanne

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(Girardot), a woman in the prime of life, is suddenly widowed and feels herself deserted and defenseless, though her stalwart children do what they can to fill the gap. She is fortunate enough to find congenial employment in the exclusive dress shop of a benign elderly Jew (Dux), who dispenses aphorisms of comforting cynicism. Less fortunately, she allows herself to be taken to bed by Pierre (Cassel), the surprisingly elegant proprietor of a neighborhood bicycle repair shop, whose divorce is by no means as final as he leads Jeanne to believe. As the title proclaims, and as we all know, life goes on, but this particular slice of it is not very arresting, though stylishly performed.

The Atomic Café is a sardonic review (put together entirely from newsclips and excerpts from government "information" films) of the propaganda that began at Alamogordo and continues to this day. It is an amalgam of cynical lies, pious hypocrisy, vulgar patriotism and ludicrously bad practical advice. It induces incredulous laughter and snorts of disgust. There is new material—some of it horrifying, some of it pathetic, some of it entertainingly absurd—but the central theme, that the American public has been hornswoggled as to the nature of atomic war, should by now be old hat. Of course, it is far from that. The film devotes a good deal of attention to government handouts on how we should prepare ourselves to survive a nuclear attack: practicing quick dives into ditches and under desks, building underground shelters and stocking them with food, comic books and guns to repel any refugees from radiation. The persistent assumption that life will continue, or be worth continuing, after an atomic war is obscene and incalculably dangerous; it has been refuted countless times. But the Reagan Administration has revived Civil Defense and is trying once again to convince us that, with a little foresight and some lead-impregnated garments, there will be enough of us left to bury the dead. Kevin Rafferty, Jayne Loader and Pierce Rafferty spent five years collecting the film footage and folk music for their picture; their editing has extracted from this raw material a high-spirited mockery and fierce indictment of entrenched folly. *The Atomic Cafe* is being shown through the end of March at the Film Forum 1 in New York City and, beginning March 27, at Filmex in Los Angeles. □

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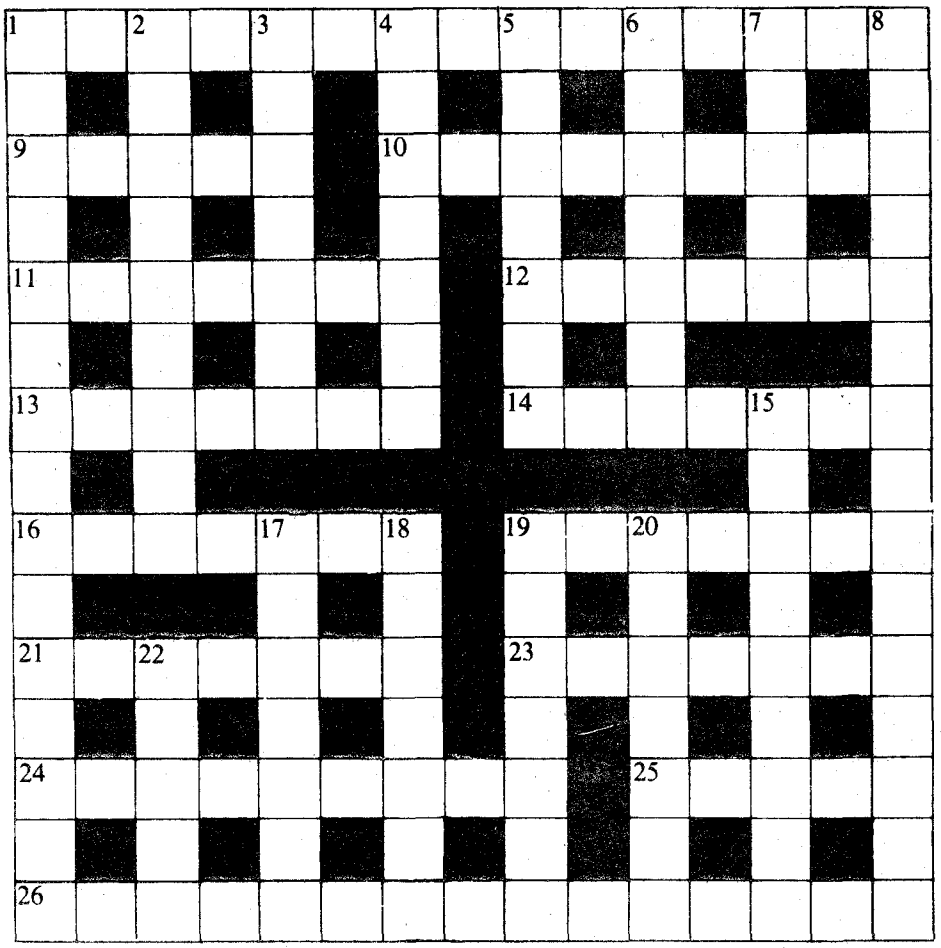
LOCAL ONE AMALGAMATED LITHOGRAPHERS UNION NEW YORK X-523

Crossword Puzzle No. 1909

FRANK W. LEWIS



ACROSS

1 The use is created if you do, and miss the point of it. (7,3,5)
9 The dog to go along with Lee's horse? (5)
10 Bill doesn't seem real, being struck with a bad play. (5,4)
11 How singers make their entrance. (7)
12 Founder in a bad position to lock. (3,4)
13 Such as painters found in dire straits? (7)
14 Freckle? (You might complain about the reception because of it.) (7)
16 Half-a-dozen devices capable of giving one chills. (7)
19 Perhaps it explains why the play was poor. (One might leave after one does.) (4,3)
21 Are Reds badly typified by McGuffey? (7)
23 Foster takes hours in its making. (7)
24 Disillusion? (I'd even cue another clue!) (9)
25 Another name for a spoiled Scots child. (5)
26 Oversight? (Intense prudence shown this way!) (15)

DOWN

1 The good points of a St. Louis player and a high churchman? (8,7)
2 Did one direct the craft of Buster Keaton's classic? (9)
3 Winds? Quite the reverse. (7)
4 There's a point to loud fire-cracker attachments being in sheds. (7)
5 Those who hesitate to get half of certain costumes? (7)
6 One from whom the Basques are supposed to be descended, or an ancient one in the Caucasus. (7)
7 Splitting atoms might be familiar to a botanist or a zoologist. (5)
8 It might be carbon, hydrogen, actinon or finally cerium—there's a certain amount of uncertainty about it. (7,2,6)
15 Supply a stipulation for sight? (9)
17 The jacket of a philosopher. (7)
18 Sitting where noises are caused by uprising around the South. (7)
19 Meet in 18. (7)
20 Short and thick, but beds have to be made up properly! (7)
22 Yet most people go down columns when they do! (3,2)

SOLUTION TO PUZZLE NO. 1908

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